

THE
W O R K S

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WALTER SCOTT, Esq.

VOL. LV.

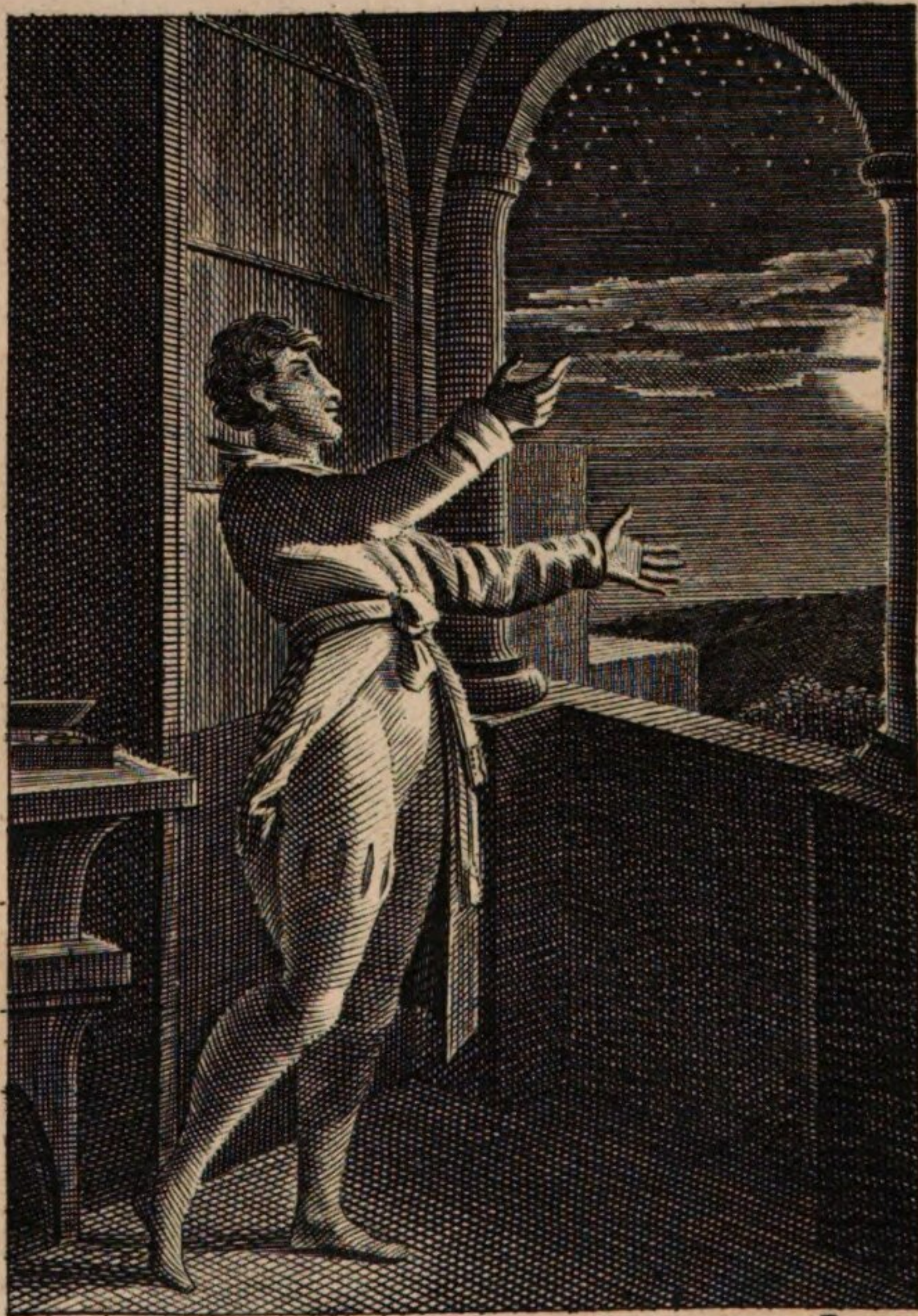
ROMANCES VOL. XLVI.

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ZWICKAU,

PRINTED FOR BROTHERS SCHUMANN.

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R. 1823

*Kenilworth. Vol II.*



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KENILWORTH;

A ROMANCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF „WAVERLEY,”
„IVANHOE,” etc.

No scandal about Queen Elizabeth, I hope?

THE CRITIK.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

ZWICKAU,

PRINTED FOR BROTHERS SCHUMANN.

1824.

REXEL WORTH

A NOVEL

BY THE AUTHOR OF "WATERS"
LONDON, 1881

The London of the "Waters" is the London of the "Waters"

IN THREE VOLUMES

Vol. I.

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WATERS

WATERS

1881

KENILWORTH.

CHAPTER X.

*There entering in, they found the goodman
selfe*

Full busylie unto his work ybent,

Who was to weete a wretched wearish elf.

*With hollow eyes and rawbone cheeks for-
spent,*

As if he had been long in prison pent.

The Faery Queene.

„Are we far from the dwelling of this smith,
my pretty lad?” said Tressilian to his young
guide.

„How is it you call me?” said the boy, look-
ing askew at him with his sharp grey eyes.

“I call you my pretty lad — is there any offence in that, my boy?”

“No — but were you with my grandame and Dominie Holiday, you might sing chorus to the old song of

‘We three
Tom - fools be.’

“And why so, my little man?” said Tressilian.

“Because,” answered the ugly urchin, “you are the only three ever called me pretty lad — Now my grandame does it because she is parcel blind by age, and whole blind by kindred — and my master, the poor Dominie, does it to curry favour, and have the fullest platter of furrimity, and the warmest seat by the fire. But what you call me pretty lad for, you know best yourself.”

“Thou art a sharp wag at least, if not a pretty one. But what do thy play-fellows call thee?”

“Hobgoblin,” answered the boy, readily; “but for all that, I would rather have my own ugly viznomy than any of their jolter-heads, that have no more brains in them than a brick-bat.”

“Then you fear not this smith, whom you are going to see?”

“Me fear him!” answered the boy; “if he

were the devil folks think him, I would not fear him; but though there is something queer about him, he's no more a devil than you are, and that's what I would not tell to every one."

"And why do you tell it to me then, my boy?"

"Because you are another guess gentleman than those we see here every day," replied Dickie; "and though I am as ugly as sin, I would not have you think me an ass, especially as I may have a boon to ask of you one day."

"And what is that, my lad, whom I must not call pretty?" replied Tressilian.

"O, if I were to ask it just now," said the boy, "you would deny it me — but I will wait till we meet at court."

"At court, Richard! are you bound for court?" said Tressilian.

"Ay, ay, that's just like the rest of them," replied the boy; "I warrant me you think, what should such an ill-favoured, scrambling urchin do at court? But let Richard Sludge alone; I have not been cock of the roost here for nothing. I will make sharp wit mend foul feature."

"But what will your grandame say, and your tutor, Dominie Holiday?"

"E'en what they like," replied Dickie; "the one has her chickens to reckon, and the other has his boys to whip; I would have given them

the candle to hold long since, and shewn this trumpery hamlet a fair pair of heels, but that Dominie promises I should go with him to bear share in the next pageant he is to set forth, and they say there are to be great revels shortly."

"And whereabout are they to be held, my little friend?" said Tressilian.

"O, at some castle far in the north," answered his guide — "a world's breadth from Berkshire. But our old Dominie holds that they cannot go forward without him; and it may be he is right, for he has put in order many a fair pageant. He is not half the fool you would take him for, when he gets to work he understands; and so he can spout verses like a play-actor, when, God wot, if you set him to steal a goose's egg, he would be drubbed by the gander."

"And you are to play a part in his next show?" said Tressilian, somewhat interested by the boy's boldness of conversation, and shrewd estimate of character.

"In faith," said Richard Sludge, in answer, "he hath so promised me; and if he break his word, it will be the worse for him; for let me take the bit between my teeth, and turn my head down hill, and I will shake him off with a fall that may harm his bones — And I should not like much to hurt him neither," said he, "for the tiresome old fool has painfully laboured

to teach me all he could. — But enough of that — here are we at Wayland Smith's forge-door."

"You jest, my little friend," said Tressilian; "here is nothing but a bare moor, and that ring of stones, with a great one in the midst, like a Cornish barrow."

"Ay, and that great flat stone in the midst, which lies across the top of these uprights," said the boy, "is Wayland Smith's counter, that you must tell down your money upon."

"What do you mean by such folly?" said the traveller, beginning to be angry with the boy, and vexed with himself for having trusted such a hare-brained guide.

"Why," said Dickie, with a grin, "you must tie your horse to that upright stone that has the ring in't, and then you must whistle three times, and lay me down your silvergroat on that other flat stone, walk out of the circle, sit down on the west side of that little thicket of bushes, and take heed you look neither to right nor to left for ten minutes, or so long as you shall hear the hammer clink, and whenever it ceases, say your prayers for the space you could tell a hundred, — or count over a hundred, which will do as well, — and then come into the circle, you will find your money gone and your horse shod."

"My money gone to a certainty!" said Tres-

silian ; «but as for the rest — Hark ye, my lad, I am not your schoolmaster, but if you play off your waggery on me, I will take a part of his task off his hands, and punish you to purpose.”

“Ay, when you can catch me!” said the boy, and presently took to his heels across the heath, with a velocity which baffled every attempt of Tressilian to overtake him, loaded as he was with his heavy boots. Nor was it the least provoking part of the urchin’s conduct, that he did not exert his utmost speed, like one who finds himself in danger or who is frightened, but preserved just such a rate as to encourage Tressilian to continue the chase, and then darted away from him with the swiftness of the wind, when his pursuer supposed he had nearly run him down, doubling, at the same time, and winding so as always to keep near the place from which he started.

This lasted until Tressilian, from very weariness, stood still, and was about to abandon the pursuit with a hearty curse on the ill-favoured urchin, who had engaged him in an exercise so ridiculous. But the boy, who had, as formerly, planted himself on the top of a hillock close in front, began to clap his long thin hands, point with his skinny fingers, and twist his wild and ugly features into such extravagant

expression of laughter and derision, that Tressilian began half to doubt whether he had not in view an actual hobgoblin.

Provoked extremely, yet at the same time feeling an irresistible desire to laugh, so very odd were the boy's grimaces and gesticulations, he returned to his horse, and mounted him with the purpose of pursuing Dickie at more advantage.

The boy no sooner saw him mount his horse, than he hollo'd out to him, that rather than he should spoil his white-footed nag, he would come to him, on condition he would keep his fingers to himself.

"I will make no condition with thee, thou naughty varlet!" said Tressilian; "I will have thee at my mercy in a moment."

"Aha, Master Traveller," said the boy, "there is a marsh hard by, would swallow all the horses of the Queen's Guard — I will into it, and see where you will go then. — You shall hear the bittern bump, and the wild drake quack, ere you get hold of me without my consent, I promise you."

Tressilian looked out, and from the appearance of the ground behind the hillock, believed it might be as the boy said, and accordingly determined to strike up a peace with so light-footed and ready-witted an enemy — "Come

down," he said, "thou mischievous brat! — Leave thy mopping and mowing, and come hither; I will do thee no harm, as I am a gentleman."

The boy answered his invitation with the utmost confidence, and danced down from his stance with a galliard sort of step, keeping his eye at the same time fixed on Tressilian's, who, once more dismounted, stood with his horse's bridle in his hand, breathless, and half exhausted with his fruitless exercise, though not one drop of moisture appeared on the freckled forehead of the urchin, which looked like a piece of dry and discoloured parchment, drawn tight across the brow of a fleshless skull.

"And tell me," said Tressilian, "why you use me thus, thou mischievous imp? or what your meaning is by telling me so absurd a legend as you wished but now to put on me? Or rather shew me, in good earnest, this smith's forge, and I will give thee what will buy thee apples through the whole winter."

"Were you to give me an orchard of apples," said Dickie Sludge, "I can guide thee no better than I have done. Lay down the silver token on the flat stone — whistle three times — then come sit down on the western side of the thicket of gorse; I will sit by you, and give you free leave to wring my head off, unless you hear

the smith at work within two minutes after we are seated."

"I may be tempted to take thee at thy word," said Tressilian, "if you make me do aught half so ridiculous for your own mischievous sport — however, I will prove your spell. — Here, then, I tie my horse to this upright stone — I must lay my silver groat here, and whistle three times, sayest thou?"

"Ay, but thou must whistle louder than an unfledged owzle," said the boy, as Tressilian, having laid down his money, and half ashamed of the folly he practised, made a careless whistle — "You must whistle louder than that, for who knows where the smith is that you call for? — He may be in the King of France's stables for what I know."

"Why, you said but now he was no devil," replied Tressilian.

"Man or devil," said Dickie, "I see that I must summon him for you; "and therewithal he whistled sharp and shrill, with an acuteness of sound that almost thrilled through Tressilian's brain — "That is what I call whistling," said he, after he had repeated the signal thrice; "and now to cover, to cover, or Whitefoot will not be shod this day."

Tressilian, musing what the upshot of this mummary was to be, yet satisfied there was to

be some serious result, by the confidence with which the boy had put himself in his power, suffered himself to be conducted to that side of the little thicket of gorse and brushwood which was farthest from the circle of stones, and there sat down: and as it occurred to him that, after all, this might be a trick for stealing his horse, he kept his hand on the boy's collar, determined to make him hostage for its safety.

"Now, hush and listen," said Dickie, in a low whisper; "you will soon hear the tack of a hammer that was never forged of earthly iron, for the stone it was made of was shot from the moon." And in effect Tressilian did immediately hear the light stroke of a hammer, as when a farrier is at work. The singularity of such a sound, in so very lonely a place, made him involuntarily shudder; but looking at the boy, and discovering, by the arch malicious expression of his countenance that the urchin saw and enjoyed his slight tremor, he became convinced that the whole was a concerted stratagem, and determined to know by whom, or for what purpose, the trick was played off.

Accordingly, he remained perfectly quiet all the time that the hammer continued to sound, being about the space usually employed in fixing a horse-shoe. But the instant the sound ceased, Tressilian, instead of interposing the

space of time which his guide had requested, started up with his sword in his hand, ran round the thicket, and confronted a man in a farrier's leathern apron, but otherwise fantastically attired in a bear-skin dressed with the fur on, and a cap of the same, which almost hid the sooty and begrimed features of the wearer — "Come back, come back!" cried the boy to Tressilian, "or you will be torn to pieces — no man lives that looks on him." — In fact, the invisible smith (now fully visible) heaved up his hammer, and shewed symptoms of doing battle.

But when the boy observed that neither his own entreaties, nor the menaces of the farrier appeared to change Tressilian's purpose, but that, on the contrary, he confronted the hammer with his drawn sword, he exclaimed to the smith in turn, "Wayland, touch him not, or you will come by the worse! — the gentleman is a true gentleman, and a bold."

"So thou hast betrayed me, Flibbertigibbet?" said the smith; "it shall be the worse for thee."

"Be who thou wilt," said Tressilian, "thou art in no danger from me, so thou tell me the meaning of this practice, and why thou drivest thy trade in this mysterious fashion."

The smith, however, turning to Tressilian, exclaimed, in a threatening tone, "Who ques-

tions the Keeper of the Crystal Castle of Light, the Lord of the Green Lion, the Rider of the Red Dragon? — Hence! — avoid thee, ere I summon Talpack with his fiery lance, to quell, crush, and consume!" These words he uttered with violent gesticulation, mouthing and flourishing his hammer.

"Peace, thou vile cozener, with thy gipsey cant!" replied Tressilian, scornfully, "and follow me to the next magistrate, or I will cut thee over the pate."

"Peace, I pray thee, good Wayland!" said the boy; "credit me the swaggering vein will not pass here, you must cut boon whids." *

"I think, worshipful sir," said the smith, sinking his hammer, and assuming a more gentle and submissive tone of voice, "that when so poor a man does his day's job, he might be permitted to work it out after his own fashion. Your horse is shod, and your farrier paid — What need you cumber yourself further, than to mount and pursue your journey?"

"Nay, friend, you are mistaken," replied Tressilian; "every man has a right to take the mask from the face of a cheat and a juggler

* "Give good words." — *Slang dialect.*

and your mode of living raises suspicion that you are both."

"If you are so determined, sir," said the smith, "I cannot help myself save by force, which I were unwilling to use towards you, Master Tressilian; — not that I fear your weapon, but because I know you to be a worthy, kind, and well-accomplished gentleman, who would rather help than harm a poor man that is in a strait."

"Well said, Wayland," said the boy, who had anxiously awaited the issue of their conference. "But let us to thy den, man, for it is ill for thy health to stand here talking in the open air."

"Thou art right, Hobgoblin," replied the smith; and going to the little thicket of gorse on the side nearest to the circle, and opposite to that at which his customer had so lately couched, he discovered a trap-door curiously covered with bushes, raised it, and, descending into the earth, vanished from their eyes. Notwithstanding Tressilian's curiosity, he had some hesitation at following the fellow into what might be a den of robbers, especially when he heard the smith's voice, issuing from the bowels of the earth, call out, "Flibbertigibbet, do you come last, and be sure to fasten the trap!"

"Have you seen enough of Wayland Smith now?" whispered the urchin to Tressilian, with an arch sneer, as if marking his companion's uncertainty.

"Not yet," said Tressilian firmly, and shaking off his momentary irresolution, he descended into the narrow stair-case to which the entrance led, and was followed by Dickie Sludge, who made fast the trap-door behind him, and thus excluded every glimmer of day-light. The descent, however, was only a few steps, and led to a level passage of a few yards length, at the end of which appeared the reflection of a lurid and red light. Arrived at this point, with his drawn sword in his hand, Tressilian found that a turn to the left admitted him and Hobgoblin, who followed closely, into a small square vault, containing a smith's forge glowing with charcoal, the vapour of which filled the apartment with an oppressive smell, which would have been altogether suffocating, but that by some concealed vent the vault communicated with the upper air. The light afforded by the red fuel, and by a lamp suspended in a iron chain, served to shew that, besides an anvil, bellows, tongs, hammers, a quantity of ready-made horse-shoes, and other articles proper to the profession of a farrier, there were also stoves, alembics, crucibles, retorts, and other instru-

ments of alchemy. The grotesque figure of the smith, and the ugly but whimsical features of the boy, seen by the gloomy and imperfect light of the charcoal-fire and the dying lamp, accorded very well with all this mystical apparatus, and in that age of superstition would have made some impression on the courage of most men.

But nature had endowed Tressilian with firm nerves, and his education, originally good, had been too sedulously improved by subsequent study to give way to any imaginary terrors; and after giving a glance around him, he again demanded of the artist who he was, and by what accident he came to know and address him by his name.

“Your worship cannot but remember,” said the smith, “that about three years since, upon Saint Lucy’s Eve, there came a travelling juggler to a certain hall in Devonshire, and exhibited his skill before a worshipful knight and a fair company — I see from your worship’s countenance, dark as this place is, that my memory has not done me wrong.”

“Thou hast said enough,” said Tressilian, turning away, as wishing to hide from the speaker the painful train of recollections which his discourse had unconsciously awakened.

“The juggler,” said the smith, “played his part so bravely, that the clowns and clown-like squires in the company held his art to be little less than magical; but there was one maiden of fifteen, or thereby, with the fairest face I ever looked upon, whose rosy cheek grew pale, and her bright eyes dim, at the sight of the wonders exhibited.”

“Peace, I command thee, peace!” said Tressilian.

“I mean your worship no offence,” said the fellow; “but I have cause to remember how, to relieve the young maiden’s fears, you condescended to point out the mode in which these deceptions were practised, and to baffle the poor juggler by laying bare the mysteries of his art, as ably as if you had been a brother of his order. — She was indeed so fair a maiden, that, to win a smile of her, a man might well” —

“Not a word more of her, I charge thee!” said Tressilian; “I do well remember the night you speak of — one of the few happy evenings my life has known.”

“She is gone, then,” said the smith, interpreting after his own fashion the sigh with which Tressilian uttered these words — “She is gone, young, beautiful, and beloved as she was! — I crave your worship’s pardon — I would have

hammered on another theme. — I see I have unwarily driven the nail to the quick."

This speech was made with a mixture of rude feeling, which inclined Tressilian favourably to the poor artizan, of whom before he was inclined to judge very harshly. But nothing can so soon attract the unfortunate, as real or seeming sympathy with their sorrows.

"I think," proceeded Tressilian, after a minute's silence, "thou wert in those days a jovial fellow, who could keep a company merry by song, and tale, and rebeck, as well as by thy juggling tricks — why do I find thee a laborious handicraftsman, plying thy trade in so melancholy a dwelling, and under such extraordinary circumstances?"

"My story is not long," said the artist; "but your honour had better sit while you listen to it." So saying, he approached to the fire a threefooted stool, and took another himself, while Dickie Sludge, or Flibbertigibbet, as he called the boy, drew a cricket to the smith's feet, and looked up in his face with features which, as illuminated by the glow of the forge, seemed convulsed with intense curiosity — "Thou too," said the smith to him, "shalt learn, as thou well deservest at my hand, the brief history of my life; and, in troth, it were as well tell it thee as leave thee to ferret it out, since

Nature never packed a shrewder wit into a more ungainly casket. — Well, sir, if my poor story may pleasure you, it is at your command — But will you not taste a stoup of liquor? I promise you that even in this poor cell I have some in store."

"Speak not of it," said Tressilian, "but go on with thy story, for my leisure is brief."

"You shall have no cause to rue the delay," said the smith, "for your horse shall be better fed in the meantime, than he hath been this morning, and made fitter for travel."

With that the artist left the vault, and returned after a few minutes interval. Here, also, we pause, that the narrative may commence in another chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

*I say, my lord can such a subtilty
(But all his craft ye must not wot of me,
And somewhat help I yet to his working)
That all the ground on which we ben riding,
Till that we come to Canterbury town,
He can all clean turnen so up so down,
And pave it all of silver and of gold.*

*The Canon's Yeoman's Prologue —
Canterbury Tales.*

THE artist resumed his narrative in the following terms: —

«I was bred a blacksmith, and knew my art as well as e'er a black-thumb'd, leathern-apron'd, swart-faced knave of that noble mystery. But I tired of ringing hammertunes on iron stithies, and went out into the world, where I became acquainted with a celebrated juggler, whose fingers had become rather too

stiff for legerdemain, and who wished to have the aid of an apprentice in his noble mystery. I served him for six years, until I was master of my trade — I refer myself to your worship, whose judgment cannot be disputed, whether I did not learn to ply the craft indifferently well?"

"Excellently," said Tressilian; "but be brief."

"It was not long after I had performed at Sir Hugh Robsart's, in your worship's presence," said the artist, "that I took myself to the stage, and have swaggered with the bravest of them all, both at the Black Bull, the Globe, the Fortune, and elsewhere; but I know not how — apples were so plenty that year, that the lads in the two-penny gallery never took more than one bite out of them, and threw the rest of the pip-pin at whatsoever actor chanced to be on the stage. So I tired of it — renounced my half share in the company — gave my foil to my comrade — my buskins to the wardrobe, and shewed the theatre a clean pair of heels."

"Well, friend, and what," said Tressilian, "was your next shift?"

"I became," said the smith, "half partner, half domestic, to a man of much skill and little substance, who practised the trade of a physicianer."

"In other words," said Tressilian, "you were Jack Pudding to a quacksalver."

«Something beyond that, let me hope, my good Master Tressilian,” replied the artist; «and yet, to say truth, our practice was of an adventurous description, and the pharmacy which I had acquired in my first studies for the benefit of horses, was frequently applied to our human patients. But the seeds of all maladies are the same; and if turpentine, tar, pitch, and beef-suet, mingled with turmerick, gum-mastick, and one head of garlick, can cure the horse that hath been grieved with a nail, I see not but what it may benefit the man that hath been pricked with a sword. But my master’s practice, as well as his skill, went far beyond mine, and dealt in more dangerous concerns. He was not only a bold adventurous practitioner in physic, but also, if your pleasure so chanced to be, an adept, who read the stars and expounded the fortunes of mankind, genethliacally, as he called it, or otherwise. He was a learned distiller of simples, and a profound chemist — made several efforts to fix mercury, and judged himself to have made a fair hit at the philosopher’s stone. I have yet a program of his on that subject, which, if your honour understandeth, I believe you have the better, not only of all who read, but also of him who wrote it.”

He gave Tressilian a scroll of parchment, bearing at top and bottom, and down the margin,

the signs of the seven planets, curiously intermingled with talismanical characters and scraps of Greek and Hebrew. In the midst were some Latin verses from a cabalistical author, written out so fairly, that even the gloom of the place did not prevent Tressilian from reading them. The tenor of the original ran as follows: —

*‘Si fixum solvas, faciasque volare solutum,
Et volucrem figas, facient te vivere tutum,
Si pariat ventum, valet aure pondere centum
Ventus ubi vult spirat — Capiat qui capere
potest.’*

“I protest to you,” said Tressilian, “all I understand of this jargon is, that the last words seem to mean ‘Catch who catch can.’”

“That,” said the smith, “is the very principle that my worthy friend and master, Doctor Do-boobie, always acted upon; until, being besotted with his own imaginations, and conceited of his high chemical skill, he began to spend in cheating himself the money which he had acquired in cheating others, and either discovered or built for himself, I could never know which, this secret elaboratory, in which he used to seclude himself both from patients and disciples, who doubtless thought his long and mysterious absences from his ordinary residence in

the town of Farringdon were occasioned by his progress in the mystic sciences, and his intercourse with the invisible world. Me also he tried to deceive; but though I contradicted him not, he saw that I knew too much of his secrets to be any longer a safe companion. Meanwhile, his name waxed famous, or rather infamous, and many of those who resorted to him did so under persuasion that he was a sorcerer. And yet his supposed advance in the occult sciences, drew to him the secret resort of men too powerful to be named, for purposes too dangerous to be mentioned. Men cursed and threatened him, and bestowed on me, the innocent assistant of his studies, the nickname of the Devil's footpost, which procured me a volley of stones as soon as ever I ventured to shew my face in the street of the village. At length, my master suddenly disappeared, pretending to me that he was about to visit his laboratory in this place, and discharging me to disturb him till two days were past. When this period had elapsed, I became anxious, and resorted to this vault, where I found the fires extinguished and the utensils in confusion, with a note from the learned Do-boobius, as he was wont to style himself, acquainting me that we should never meet again, bequeathing me his chemical apparatus, and the parchment which I have just put into your hands,

advising me strongly to prosecute the secret which it contained, which would infallibly lead me to the discovery of the grand magisterium."

"And didst thou follow this sage advice?" said Tressilian.

"Worshipful sir, no," replied the smith; "for being by nature cautious and suspicious, from knowing with whom I had to do, I made so many perquisitions before I ventured even to light a fire, that I at length discovered a small barrel of gunpowder, carefully hid beneath the furnace, with the purpose, no doubt, that as soon as I should commence the grand work of the transmutation of metals, the explosion should transmute the vault and all in it into a heap of ruins, which might serve at once for my slaughter-house and my grave. This cured me of alchemy, and fain would I have returned to the honest hammer and anvil; but who would bring a horse to be shod by the Devil's post? Meantime, I had won the regard of my honest Flibbertigibbet here, he being then at Faringdon with his master, the sage Erasmus Holiday, by teaching him a few secrets, such as please youth at his age; and after much counsel together, we agreed, that since I could get no practice in the ordinary way, I should try how I could work out business among these ignorant boors, by practising upon their silly fears, and thanks to

Flibbertigibbet who hath spread my renown, I have not wanted custom. But it is won at too great risk, and I fear I shall be at length taken up for a wizard; so that I seek but an opportunity to leave this vault when I can have the protection of some worshipful person against the fury of the populace, in case they chance to recognize me."

"And art thou," said Tressilian, "perfectly acquainted with the roads in this country?"

"I could ride them every inch by midnight," answered Wayland Smith, which was the name this adept had adopted.

"Thou hast no horse to ride upon," said Tressilian.

"Pardon me," replied Wayland; "I have as good a tit as ever yeoman bestrode; and I forgot to say it was the best part of the mediciner's legacy to me, excepting one or two of his medical secrets, which I picked up without his knowledge and against his will."

"Get thyself washed and shaved then," said Tressilian; "reform thy dress as well as thou canst, and fling away these grotesque trappings; and, so thou wilt be secret and faithful, thou shalt follow me for a short time, till thy pranks here are forgotten. Thou hast, I think, both address and courage, and I have matter to do that may require both."

Wayland Smith eagerly embraced the proposal, and protested his devotion to his new master. In a very few minutes he had made so great a change in his original appearance, by change of dress, trimming his beard and hair and so forth, that Tressilian could not help remarking, that he thought he would stand in little need of a protector, since none of his old acquaintance was like to recognize him.

“My debtors would not pay me money,” said Wayland, shaking his head; “but my creditors of every kind would be less easily blinded. And, in truth, I hold myself not safe, unless under the protection of a gentleman of birth and character, as that of your worship.”

So saying, he led the way out of the cavern. He then called loudly for Hobgoblin, who, after lingering for an instant, appeared with the horse furniture, when Wayland closed, and sedulously covered up the trap-door, observing, it might again serve him at his need, besides that the tools were worth somewhat. A whistle from the owner brought to his side a nag that fed quietly on the common, and was accustomed to the signal. While he accoutred him for the journey, Tressilian drew his own girths faster, and in a few minutes both were ready to mount.

At this moment Sludge approached to bid them farewell.

“You are going to leave me then, my old playfellow,” said the boy; “and there is an end of all our game at bo-peep with the cowardly lubbards whom I brought hither to have their broadfooted nags shod by the devil and his imps.”

“It is even so,” said Wayland Smith; “the best friends must part, Flibbertigibbet; but thou, my boy, art the only thing in the Vale of White Horse which I shall regret to leave behind me.”

“Well, I bid thee not farewell,” said Dickie Sludge, “for you will be at these revels, I judge, and so shall I; for if Dominie Holiday take me not thither, by the light of day, which we see not in yonder dark hole, I will take myself there!”

“In good time,” said Wayland; “but I pray you to do nought rashly.”

“Nay, now you would make a child — a common child of me, and tell me of the risk of walking without leading strings. But before you are a mile from these stones, you shall know, by a sure token, that I have more of the hobgoblin about me than you credit; and I will so manage, that, if you take advantage, you may profit by my prank.”

“What doest thou mean, boy?” said Tressilian; but Flibbertigibbet only answered with a grin and a caper, and bidding both of them farewell, and at the same time exhorting them to

make the best of their way from the place, he set them the example by running homeward with the same uncommon velocity with which he had baffled Tressilian's former attempts to get hold of him.

"It is in vain to chase him," said Wayland Smith; "for unless your worship is expert in lark-hunting, we should never catch hold of him — and besides what would it avail? Better make the best of our way hence, as he advises."

They mounted their horses accordingly, and began to proceed at a round pace, as soon as Tressilian had explained to his guide the road in which he desired to travel.

After they had trotted nearly a mile, Tressilian could not help observing to his companion, that his horse felt more lively under him than even when he mounted in the morning.

"Are you avised of that?" said Wayland Smith, smiling. "That is owing to a little secret of mine. I mixed that with an handful of oats which shall save your worship's heels the trouble of spurring these six hours at least. Nay, I have not studied medicine and pharmacy for nought."

"I trust," said Tressilian, "your drugs will do my horse no harm."

"No more than the mare's milk which foaled him," answered the artist; and was proceeding

to dilate on the excellence of his recipe, when he was interrupted by an explosion as loud and tremendous as the mine which blows up the rampart of a beleaguered city. The horses started, and the riders were equally surprised. They turned to gaze in the direction from which the thunder-clap was heard, and beheld, just over the spot they had left so recently, a huge pillar of dark smoke rising high into the clear blue atmosphere. "My habitation is gone to wrack," said Wayland, immediately conjecturing the cause of the explosion — "I was a fool to mention the doctor's kind intentions towards my mansion before that limb of mischief Flibbertigibbet — I might have guessed he would long to put so rare a frolic into execution. But let us hasten on, for the sound will collect the country to the spot."

So saying, he spurred his horse, and Tressilian also quickening his speed, they rode briskly forward.

"This, then, was the meaning of the little imp's token which he promised us," said Tressilian; "had we lingered near the spot we had found it a love-token with a vengeance."

"He would have given us warning," said the smith; "I saw him look back more than once to see if we were off — 'tis a very devil for mischief, yet not an ill-natured devil either. It

were long to tell your honour how I became first acquainted with him, and how many tricks he played me. Many a good turn he did me too, especially in bringing me customers; for his great delight was to see them sit shivering behind the bushes when they heard the click of my hammer. I think Dame Nature, when she lodged a double quantity of brains in that misshapen head of his, gave him the power of enjoying other people's distresses, as she gave them the pleasure of laughing at his ugliness."

"It may be so," said Tressilian; "those who find themselves severed from society by peculiarities of form, if they do not hate the common bulk of mankind, are at least not altogether indisposed to enjoy their mishaps and calamities."

"But Flibbertigibbet," answered Wayland, "hath that about him which may redeem his turn for mischievous frolic; for he is as faithful when attached, as he is tricky and malignant to strangers; and, as I said before, I have cause to say so."

Tressilian pursued the conversation no farther; and they continued then journey towards Devonshire without farther adventure, until they alighted at an inn in the town of Marlborough, since celebrated for having given title to the greatest general (excepting one) whom Britain ever produced. Here the travellers received, in the same

breath, an example of the truth of two old proverbs, namely, that ill news fly fast, and that Listeners seldom hear a good tale of themselves.

The inn-yard was in a sort of combustion when they alighted; insomuch, that they could scarce get man or boy to take care of their horses, so full were the whole household of some news which flew from tongue to tongue, the import of which they were for some time unable to discover. At length, indeed, they found it respected matters which touched them nearly.

“What is the matter, say you, master?” answered, at length, the head hostler, in reply to Tressilian’s repeated questions — “Why, truly, I scarce know myself. But here was a rider but now, who says that the devil hath flown away with him they called Wayland Smith, that wonn’d about three miles from the White Horse of Berkshire, this very blessed morning, in a flash of fire and a pillar of smoke, and rooted up the place he dwelt in, near that old cock-pit of upright stones, as cleanly as if it had all been delved up for a cropping.”

“Why, then,” said an old farmer, “the more is the pity — for that Wayland Smith (whether he was the devil’s crony or no I skill not,) had a good notion of horse diseases, and it’s to be thought the bots will spread in the country far

and near, an Satan has not gi'en un time to leave his secret behind un."

"You may say that, Gaffer Grimesby," said the hostler in return; "I have carried a horse to Wayland Smith myself, for he passed all farriers in this country."

"Did you see him?" said Dame Alison Crane, mistress of the inn bearing that sign, and deigning to term husband the owner thereof, an insignificant hop-o'-my-thumb sort of person, whose halting gait, and long neck, and meddling henpecked insignificance, are supposed to have given origin to the celebrated old English tune of "My Dame hath a lame tame Crane."

On this occasion he chirp'd out a repetition of his wife's question, "Did'st see the devil, Jack Hostler, I say?"

"And what if I did see un, Master Crane?" replied Jack Hostler, — for, like all the rest of the household, he paid as little respect to his master as his mistress herself did.

"Nay, nought, Jack Hostler," replied the pacific Master Crane, "only if you saw the devil, methinks I would like to know what un's like?"

"You will know that one day, Master Crane," said his helpmate, "an' ye mend not your manners, and mind your business, leaving off such idle palabras — But truly, Jack Hostler, I should be glad to know myself what like the fellow was."

“Why, Dame,” said the hostler, more respectfully, “as for what he was like I cannot tell, nor no man else, for why I never saw un.”

“And how didst thou get thine errand done,” said Gaffer Grimesby, “if thou seed’st him not?”

“Why, I had schoolmaster to write down ailment o’ nag,” said Jack Hostler; “and I went wi’ the ugliest slip of a boy for my guide as ever man cut out o’ lime-tree root to please a child withal.”

“And what was it? — and did it cure your nag, Jack Hostler?” — was uttered and echoed by all who stood around.

“Why, how can I tell you what it was?” said the hostler; “simply it smelled and tasted — for I did make bold to put a pea’s substance into my mouth — like hartshorn and savin mixed with vinegar — but then no hartshorn and savin ever wrought so speedy a cure — And I am dreading that if Wayland Smith be gone, the bots will have more power over horse and cattle.”

The pride of art, which is certainly not inferior in its influence to any other pride whatsoever, here so far operated on Wayland Smith, that, notwithstanding the obvious danger of his being recognized, he could not help winking to Tressilian, and smiling mysteriously, as if triumphing in the undoubted evidence of his veterinary skill. In the meanwhile, the discourse continued.

“E’en let it be so,” said a grave man in black, the companion of Gaffer Grimesby; “e’en let us perish under the evil God sends us, rather than the Devil be our doctor.”

“Very true,” said Dame Crane; “and I marvel at Jack Hostler that he would peril his own soul to cure the bowels of a nag.”

“Very true, mistress,” said Jack Hostler, “but the nag was my master’s; and had it been your’s, I think ye would ha’ held me cheap enow an I had feared the Devil when the poor beast was in such a taking — For the rest, let the clergy look to it. Every man to his craft, says the proverb; the parson to the prayer-book, and the groom to his curry-comb.”

“I vow,” said Dame Crane, “I think Jack Hostler speaks like a good Christian and a faithful servant, who will spare neither body nor soul in his master’s service. However, the devil has lifted him in time, for a Constable of the Hundred came hither this morning to get old Gaffer Pinniewinks, the trier of witches, to go with him to the Vale of Whitehorse to comprehend Wayland Smith, and put him to his probation. I helped Pinniewinks to sharpen his pincers and his pocking-awl, and I saw the warrant from Justice Blindas.”

“Pooh — pooh — the devil would laugh both at Blindas and his warrant, constable, and

witchfinder to boot," said old Dame Crank, the papist laundress; "Wayland Smith's flesh would mind Pinniewink's awl no more than a cambric ruff minds a hot piccadilloe-needle. But tell me, gentle-folks, if the devil ever had such a hand among ye, as to snatch away your smiths and your artists from under your nose, when the good Abbots of Abingdon had their own. By Our Lady, no! — they had their hallowed tapers, and their holy water, and their relics and what not, could send the foulest fiends a-packing. — Go ask a heretic parson to do the like — But ours were a comfortable people."

"Very true, Dame Crank," said the hostler; "so said Simpkins of Simonburn when the curate kissed his wife, — 'They are a comfortable people,' said he."

"Silence, thou foul mouthed vermin," said Dame Crank; "is it fit for a heretic horse-boy like thee, to handle such a text as the Catholic clergy?"

"In troth no, dame," replied the man of oats; "and as you yourself are now no text for their handling, dame, whatever may have been the case in your day, I think we had e'en better leave un alone."

At this last exchange of sarcasm, Dame Crank set up her throat, and began a horrible exclamation against Jack Hostler, under cover of

which Tressilian and his attendant escaped into the house.

They had no sooner entered a private chamber, to which Goodman Crane himself had condescended to usher them, and dispatched their worthy and obsequious host on the errand of procuring wine and refreshment, than Wayland Smith began to give vent to his self-importance.

“You see, sir,” said he, addressing Tressilian, “that I nothing fabled in asserting that I possessed fully the mighty mystery of a farrier, or mareschal, as the French more honourably term us. These dog hostlers, who, after all, are the better judges in such a case, know what credit they should attach to my medicaments. I call you to witness, worshipful Master Tressilian, that nought, save the voice of calumny and the hand of malicious violence, hath driven me forth from a station in which I held a place alike useful and honoured.”

“I bear witness, my friend, but will reserve my listening,” answered Tressilian, “for a safer time; unless, indeed, you deem it essential to your reputation, to be translated, like your late dwelling, by the assistance of a flash of fire. For you see your best friends reckon you no better than a mere sorcerer.”

“Now, heaven forgive them,” said the artist, “who confound learned skill with unlawful ma-

gic! I trust a man may be as skilful, or more so, than the best chirurgeon ever meddled with horseflesh, and yet may be upon the matter little more than other ordinary men, or at the worst no conjuror."

"God forbid else!" said Tressilian. "But be silent just for the present, since here comes mine host with an assistant, who seems something of the least."

Every body about the inn, Dame Crank herself included, had been indeed so interested and agitated by the story they had heard of Wayland Smith, and by the new, varying, and more marvellous editions of the incident, which arrived from various quarters, that mine host, in his righteous determination to accommodate his guests, had been able to obtain the assistance of none of his household, saving that of a little boy, a junior tapster, of about twelve years old, who was called Sampson.

"I wish," he said, apologizing to his guests, as he set down a flagon of sack, and promised some food immediately, — "I wish the devil had flown away with my wife and my whole family instead of this Wayland Smith, who, I dare say, after all said and done, was much less worthy of the distinction that Satan has done him."

"I hold opinion with you, good fellow," replied Wayland Smith; "and I will drink to you upon that argument."

"Not that I would justify any man who deals with the devil," said mine host, after having pledged Wayland in a rousing draught of sack, "but that — Saw ye ever better sack, my masters? — but that, I say, a man had better deal with a dozen cheats and scoundrel fellows, such as this Wayland Smith, rather than with a devil incarnate, that takes possession of house and home, bed and board."

The poor fellow's detail of grievances was here interrupted by the shrill voice of his helpmate, screaming from the kitchen, to which he instantly hobbled, craving pardon of his guests. He was no sooner gone, than Wayland Smith expressed, by every contemptuous epithet in the language, his utter scorn for a nincompoop, who stuck his head under his wife's apron-string; and intimated, that, saving for the sake of the horses, which required both rest and food, he would advise his worshipful Master Tressilian to push on a stage farther, rather than pay a reckoning to such a meanspirited, crow-trodden, hen-pecked, coxcomb, as Gaffer Crane.

The arrival of a large dish of good cowheel and bacon, something soothed the asperity of the artist, which wholly vanished before a choice

capon, so delicately roasted, that the lard frothed on it, said Wayland, like May-dew on a lily; and both Gaffer Crane and his good dame became, in his eyes, very pains-taking, accommodating, obliging persons.

According to the manners of the times, the master and his attendant sat at the same table, and the latter observed with regret, how little attention Tressilian paid to his meal. He recollected, indeed, the pain he had given by mentioning the maiden in whose company he had first seen him; but, fearful of touching upon a topic too tender to be tampered with, he chose to ascribe his abstinence to another cause.

“This fare is perhaps too coarse for your worship,” said Wayland, as the limbs of the capon disappeared before his own exertions; “but had you dwelt as long as I have done in yonder dungeon, which Flibbertigibbet has translated to the upper element, a place where I dared hardly broil my food, lest the smoke should be seen without, you would think a fair capon a more welcome dainty.”

“If you are pleased, friend,” said Tressilian, “it is well. Nevertheless, hasten thy meal if thou canst, for this place is unfriendly to thy safety, and my concerns crave travelling.”

Allowing, therefore, their horses no more rest than was absolutely necessary for them, they

pursued their journey by a forced march as far as Bradford, where they reposed themselves for the night.

The next morning found them early travellers. And, not to fatigue the reader with unnecessary particulars, they traversed without adventure the counties of Wiltshire and Somerset, and about noon of the third day after Tressilian's leaving Cumnor, arrived at Sir Hugh Robsart's seat, called Lidcote Hall, on the frontiers of Devonshire.

CHAPTER XII.

*Ah me! the flower and blossom of your house,
The wind hath blown away to other towers.*

JOANNA BAILLIE'S Family Legend.

THE ancient seat of Lidcote Hall was situated near the village of the same name, and adjoined to the wild and extensive forest of Exmoor, plentifully stocked with game, in which some ancient rights belonging to the Robsart family, entitled Sir Hugh to pursue his favourite amusement of the chase. The old mansion was a low, venerable building, occupying a considerable space of ground, which was surrounded by a deep moat. The approach and drawbridge were defended by an octagonal tower, of ancient brick-work, but so clothed with ivy and other creepers, that it was difficult to discover of what

materials it was constructed. The angles of this tower were each decorated with a turret, whimsically various in form and in size, and, therefore, very unlike the monotonous stone pepper-boxes, which, in modern Gothic architecture, are employed for the same purpose. One of these turrets was square, and occupied as a clock-house. But the clock was now standing still; a circumstance peculiarly striking to Tressilian, because the good old knight, among other harmless peculiarities, had a fidgetty anxiety about the exact measurement of time, very common to those who have a great deal of that commodity to dispose of, and find it lie heavy upon their hands, — just as we see shopkeepers amuse themselves with taking an exact account of their stock at the time there is least demand for it.

The entrance to the court-yard of the old mansion lay through an arch-way, surmounted by the foresaid tower, but the draw-bridge was down, and one leaf of the iron-studded folding-doors stood carelessly open. Tressilian hastily rode over the drawbridge, entered the court, and began to call loudly on the domestics by their names. For sometime he was only answered by the echoes and the howling of the hounds, whose kennel lay at no great distance from the mansion, and was surrounded by the

same moat. At length Will Badger, the old and favourite attendant of the knight, who acted alike as squire of his body, and superintendent of his sports, made his appearance. The stout, weather-beaten forester shewed great signs of joy when he recognized Tressilian.

“Lord love you,” he said, “Master Edmund, be it thou in flesh and fell? — Then thou mayst do some good on Sir Hugh, for it passes the wit of man, that is of mine own, and the Curate’s, and Master Mumblazen’s, to do aught wi’ un.”

“Is Sir Hugh then worse since I went away, Will?” demanded Tressilian.

“For worse in body — no — he is much better,” replied the domestic; “but he is clean mazed as it were — eats and drinks as he is wont — but sleeps not, or rather wakes not, for he is ever in a sort of twilight, that is neither sleeping nor waking. Dame Swineford thought it was like the dead palsy. — But no, no, dame, said I, it is the heart, it is the heart.”

“Can ye not stir his mind to any pastimes?” said Tressilian.

“He is clean and quite off his sports,” said Will Badger; “hath neither touched backgammon or shovel-board — nor looked on the big book of harrotry wi’ Master Mumblazen. I let

the clock run down, thinking the missing the bell might somewhat move him, for you know, Master Edmund, he was particular in counting time; but he never said a word on't, so I may e'en set the old chime a towling again. I made bold to tread on Bungay's tail too, and you know what a round rating that would ha' cost me once a-day — but he minded his whine no more than a madge howlet whooping down the chimney — so the case is beyond me."

"Thou shalt tell me the rest within doors, Will. — Meanwhile, let this person be ta'en to the buttery, and used with respect — He is a man of art."

"White art or black art, I would," said Will Badger, "that he had any art which could help us. — Here, Tom Butler, look to the man of art — and see that he steals none of thy spoons, lad," he added, in a whisper to the butler, who shewed himself at a low window, "I have known as honest a faced fellow have art enough to do that."

He then ushered Tressilian into a low parlour, and went, at his desire, to see in what state his master was, lest the sudden return of his darling pupil, and proposed son-in-law, should affect him too strongly. He returned immediately, and said that Sir Hugh was dozing in his

elbow chair, but Master Mumblazen would acquaint Master Tressilian the instant he awaked.

“But it is chance if he knows you,” said the huntsman, “for he has forgotten the name of every hound in the pack. I thought about a week since, he had gotten a favourable turn: — ‘Saddle me old Sorrel,’ said he, suddenly, after he had taken his usual night-draught out of the great silver grace-cup, and take the hounds to Mount Hazelhurst to-morrow.’ Glad men were we all, and out we had him in the morning, and he rode to cover as usual, with never a word but that the wind was south, and the scent would lie. But ere we had uncoupled the hounds, he began to stare round him, like a man that wakes suddenly out of a dream — turns bridle and walks back to Hall again, and leaves us to hunt at leisure by ourselves, if we listed.”

“You tell a heavy tale, Will,” replied Tressilian; “but God must help us — there is no aid in man.”

“Then you bring us no news of young Mistress Amy? — But what need I ask — your brow tells the story. Ever I hoped, that if any man could or would track her it must be you. All’s over and lost now. But if ever I have that Varney within reach of a flight-shot, I will bestow a forked shaft on him; and that I swear by salt and bread.”

As he spoke, the door opened, and Master Mumblazen appeared; a withered, thin, elderly gentleman, with a cheek like a winter apple, and his grey hair partly concealed by a small high hat, shaped like a cone, or rather like such a strawberry-basket as London fruiterers exhibit at their windows. He was too sententious a person to waste words on mere salutation; so, having welcomed Tressilian with a nod and a shake of the hand, he beckoned him to follow to Sir Hugh's great chamber, which the good knight usually inhabited. Will Badger followed, unasked, anxious to see whether his master would be relieved from his state of apathy by the arrival of Tressilian.

In a long low parlour, amply furnished with implements of the chase, and with sylvan trophies, by a massive stone chimney, over which hung a sword and suit of armour, somewhat obscured by neglect, sat Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote, a man of large size, which had been only kept within moderate compass by the constant use of violent exercise. It seemed to Tressilian that the lethargy, under which his old friend appeared to labour, had, even during his few weeks absence, added bulk to his person; at least it had obviously diminished the vivacity of his eye, which, as they entered, first followed Master Mumblazen slowly to a large oaken

desk, on which a ponderous volume lay open, and then rested, as if in uncertainty, on the stranger who had entered along with him. The curate, a grey-headed clergyman, who had been a confessor in the days of Queen Mary, sat with a book in his hand in another recess in the apartment. He, too, signed a mournful greeting to Tressilian, and laid his book aside, to watch the effect his appearance should produce on the afflicted old man.

As Tressilian, his own eyes filling fast with tears, approached more and more nearly to the father of his betrothed bride, Sir Hugh's intelligence seemed to revive. He sighed heavily, as one who awakens from a state of stupor, a slight convulsion passed over his features, he opened his arms without speaking a word, and as Tressilian threw himself into them, he folded him to his bosom.

"There is something left to live for yet," were the first words he uttered; and while he spoke, he gave vent to his feelings in a paroxysm of weeping, the tears chasing each other down his sun-burnt cheeks and long white beard.

"I ne'er thought to have thanked God to see my master weep," said Will Badger; "but now I do, though I am like to weep for company."

“I will ask thee no questions,” said the old Knight; “no questions — none, Edmund — thou hast not found her, or so found her, that she were better lost.”

Tressilian was unable to reply, otherwise than by putting his hands before his face.

“It is enough — it is enough. But do not thou weep for her, Edmund. I have cause to weep, for she was my daughter, — thou hast cause to rejoice, that she did not become thy wife. — Great God! thou knowest best what is good for us — It was my nightly prayer that I should see Amy and Edmund wedded, — had it been granted, it had now been gall added to bitterness.”

“Be comforted, my friend,” said the Curate, addressing Sir Hugh, “it cannot be that the daughter of all our hopes and affections is the vile creature you would bespeak her.”

“O, no,” replied Sir Hugh, impatiently, “I were wrong to name broadly the base thing she is become — there is some new court name for it, I warrant me. It is honour enough for the daughter of an old De’nshire clown to be the lemman of a gay courtier, — of Varney too, — of Varney, whose grandsire was relieved by my father, when his fortune was broken, at the battle of — the battle of — where Richard was

slain — out on my memory — and I warrant none of you will help me.” —

“The battle of Bosworth,” said Master Mumblazen, “stricken between Richard Crookback and Henry Tudor. grandsire of the Queen that now is, Primo Henrici Septimi; and in the year one thousand four hundred and eighty five, *post Christum natum*.”

“Ay, even so,” said the good Knight, “every child knows it — But my poor head forgets all it should remember, and remembers only what it would most willingly forget. My brain has been at fault, Tressilian, almost ever since thou hast been away, and even yet it hunts counter.”

“Your worship,” said the good clergyman, “had better retire to your apartment, and try to sleep for a little space, — the physician left a composing draught, — and our Great Physician has commanded us to use earthly means, that we may be strengthened to sustain the trials he sends us.”

“True, true, old friend,” said Sir Hugh, “and we will bear our trials manfully — We have lost but a woman. — See, Tressilian,” — he drew from his bosom a long ringlet of fair hair, — “see this lock! — I tell thee, Edmund, the very night she disappeared, when she bid me good even, as she was wont, she hung about my neck, and fondled me more than usual; and

I, like an old fool, held her by this lock, until she took her scissars, severed it, and left it in my hand, — as all I was ever to see more of her!”

Tressilian was unable to reply, well judging what a complication of feelings must have crossed the bosom of the unhappy fugitive at that cruel moment. The clergyman was about to speak, but Sir Hugh interrupted him.

“I know what you would say, Master Curate, — after all, it is but a lock of woman’s tresses, — and by woman, shame, and sin, and death, came into an innocent world — And learned Master Mumblazen, too, can say scholarly things of their inferiority.”

“*C’est l’homme,*” said Master Mumblazen, “*qui se bat et qui conseille.*”

“True,” said Sir Hugh, “and we will bear us, therefore, like men who have both mettle and wisdom in us. — Tressilian, thou art as welcome as if thou hadst brought better news. But we have spoken too long dry-lipped, — Amy, fill a cup of wine to Edmund, and another to me.” Then instantly recollecting that he called upon her who could not hear, he shook his head, and said to the clergyman, “This grief is to my bewildered mind what the Church of Lidcote is to our park; we may lose ourselves among the briars and thickets, for a little space, but from the end of each avenue we see the

old grey steeple and the grave of my forefathers. I would I were to travel that road to-morrow."

Tressilian and the Curate joined in urging the exhausted old man to lay himself to rest, and at length prevailed. Tressilian remained by his pillow till he saw that slumber at length sunk down on him, and then returned to consult with the Curate what steps should be adopted in these unhappy circumstances.

They could not exclude from these deliberations Master Michael Mumblazen; and they admitted him the more readily, that besides what hopes they entertained from his sagacity, they knew him to be so great a friend to taciturnity, that there was no doubt of his keeping counsel. He was an old bachelor, of good family, but small fortune, and distantly related to the House of Robsart; in virtue of which connection, Lidcote Hall had been honoured with his residence for the last twenty years. His company was agreeable to Sir Hugh, chiefly on account of his profound learning, which, though it only related to heraldry and genealogy, with such scraps of history as connected themselves with these subjects, was precisely of a kind to captivate the good old knight; besides the convenience which he found in having a friend to appeal to, when his own memory, as frequently happened, proved infirm, and played him false concerning na-

mes and dates, which, and all similar deficiencies, Master Michael Mumblazen supplied with due brevity and discretion. And, indeed, in matters concerning the modern world, he often gave, in his enigmatical and heraldic phrase, advice which was well worth attending to, or, in Will Badger's language, started the game while others beat the bush.

"We have had an unhappy time of it with the good Knight, Master Edmund," said the Curate. "I have not suffered so much since I was torn away from my beloved flock, and compelled to abandon them to the Romish wolves."

"That was in *Tertio Mariæ*," said Master Mumblazen.

"In the name of heaven," continued the Curate, "tell us, has your time been better spent than ours, or have you any news of that unhappy maiden, who, being for so many years the principal joy of this broken down house, is now proved our greatest unhappiness? Have you not at least discovered her place of residence?"

"I have," replied Tressilian. "Know you Cumnor-Place, near Oxford?"

"Surely," said the clergyman; "it was a cell of removal for the monks of Abingdon."

"Whose arms," said Master Michael, "I have seen over a stone chimney in the hall, — a cross patonee betwixt four martlets."

“There,” said Tressilian, “this unhappy maiden resides, in company with the villain Varney. But for a strange mishap, my sword had revenged all our injuries, as well as hers, on his worthless head.”

“Thank God, that kept thine hand from blood-guiltiness, rash young man,” answered the Curate. “Vengeance is mine,” said the Lord, “and I will repay it.” It were better study to free her from the villain’s nets of infamy.”

“They are called, in heraldry, *laqueæ amoris*, or *lacs damour*,” said Mumblazen.

“It is in that I require your aid, my friends,” said Tressilian; “I am resolved to accuse this villain, at the very foot of the throne, of falsehood, seduction, and breach of hospitable laws. The Queen shall hear me, though the Earl of Leicester, the villain’s patron, stood at her right hand.”

“Her Grace,” said the Curate, “hath set a comely example of continence to her subjects, and will doubtless do justice on this inhospitable robber. But wert thou not better apply to the Earl of Leicester, in the first place, for justice on his servant? If he grants it, thou dost save the risk of making thyself a powerful adversary, which will certainly chance, if, in the first instance, you accuse his master of the horse, and prime favourite, before the Queen.”

“My mind revolts from your counsel,” said Tressilian. “I cannot brook to plead my noble patron’s cause — the unhappy Amy’s cause — before any one save my lawful Sovereign. Leicester, thou wilt say, is noble — be it so — he is but a subject like ourselves, and I will not carry my plaint to him, if I can do better. Still, I will think on what thou hast said, — but I must have your assistance to persuade the good Sir Hugh to make me his commissioner and fiduciary in this matter, for it is in his name I must speak, and not in my own. Since she is so far changed as to doat upon this empty profligate courtier, he shall at least do her the justice which is yet in his power.”

“Better she died *cælebs* and *sine prole*,” said Mumblazen, with more animation than he usually expressed, “then part, *per pale*, the noble coat of Robsart with that of such a miscreant.”

“If it be your object, as I cannot question,” said the clergyman, “to save, as much as is yet possible, the credit of this unhappy young woman, I repeat, you should apply, in the first instance, to the Earl of Leicester. He is as absolute in his household as the Queen in her kingdom, and if he expresses to Varney that such is his pleasure, her honour will not stand so publicly committed.”

“You are right, you are right,” said Tressilian

eagerly, "and I thank you for pointing out what I overlooked in my haste. I little thought ever to have besought grace of Leicester; but I could kneel to the proud Dudley, if doing so could remove one shade of shame from this unhappy damsel. You will assist me then to procure the necessary powers from Sir Hugh Robsart?"

The Curate assured him of his assistance, and the herald nodded assent.

"You must hold yourselves also in readiness to testify, in case you are called upon, the open-hearted hospitality which our good patron exercised towards this deceitful traitor, and the solicitude with which he laboured to seduce his unhappy daughter."

"At first," said the clergyman, "she did not, as it seemed to me, much affect his company, but latterly I saw them often together."

"*Seiant* in the parlour," said Michael Mumblazen, "and *passant* in the garden."

"I once came on them by chance," said the priest; "in the South wood, in a spring evening — Varney was muffled in a russet cloak, so that I saw not his face, — they separated hastily, as they heard me rustle amongst the leaves, and I observed she turned her head and looked long after him."

"With neck *regardant*," said the herald — "And on the day of her flight, and that was on

Saint Austen's eve, I saw Varney's groom, attired in his liveries, hold his master's horse and Mistress Amy's palfrey, bridled and saddled *proper* behind the wall of the church-yard."

"And now is she found mew'd up in her secret place of retirement," said Tressilian. "The villain is taken in the manner, and I well wish he may deny his crime, that I may thrust conviction down his false throat. But I must prepare for my journey. Do you, gentlemen, dispose my patron to grant me such powers as are needful to act in his name."

So saying, Tressilian left the room.

"He is too hot," said the Curate; "and I pray to God that he may grant him the patience to deal with Varney as is fitting."

"Patience and Varney," said Mumblazen, "is worse heraldry than metal upon metal. He is more false than a Syren, more rapacious than a griffin, more poisonous than a wyvern, and more cruel than a lion rampant."

"Yet I doubt much," said the Curate, "whether we can with all right ask from Sir Hugh Robsart, being in his present condition, any deed deputing his paternal right in Mistress Amy to whomsoever" —

"Your reverence need not doubt that," said Will Badger, who entered as he spoke, "for I

will lay my life he is another man when he wakes, than he has been these thirty days past."

"Ay, Will," said the Curate, "hast thou then so much confidence in Doctor Diddleum's draught?"

"Not a whit," said Will, "because master ne'er tasted a drop on't, seeing it was emptied out by the housemaid. But here's a gentleman, who came attending on Master Tressilian, has given Sir Hugh a draught that is worth twenty of yon un. I have spoken cunningly with him, and a better farrier, or one who hath a more just notion of horse and dog ailment. I have never seen; and such a one would never be unjust to a Christian man."

"A farrier! you saucy groom — And by whose authority, pray?" said the Curate, rising in surprise and indignation; "or who will be warrant for this new physician?"

"For authority, an it like your reverence, he had mine; and for warrant, I trust, I have not been five-and-twenty years in this house, without having right to warrant the giving of a draught to beast or body — I who can gie a drench, and a ball, and bleed, or blister, if need, to my very self."

The counsellors of the House of Robsart thought it meet to carry this information instantly to Tressilian, who as speedily summoned

before him Wayland Smith, and demanded of him, (in private however,) by what authority he had ventured to administer any medicine to Sir Hugh Robsart?

“Why,” replied the artist, “your worship cannot but remember that I told you I had made more progress into my master’s — I mean the learned Doctor Doboobie’s — mystery than he was willing to own; and indeed half of his quarrel and malice against me was, that, besides that I got something too deep into his secrets, several discerning persons, and particularly a buxom young widow of Abingdon, preferred my prescription to his.”

“None of thy buffoonery, sir,” said Tressilian, sternly. “If thou hast trifled with us — much more, if thou hast done aught that may prejudice Sir Hugh Robsart’s health, thou shalt find thy grave at the bottom of a tin-mine.”

“I know too little of the great *arcanum* to convert the ore to gold,” said Wayland, firmly. “But truce to your apprehensions, Master Tressilian — I understood the good Knight’s case, from what Master William Badger told me; and I hope I am able enough to administer a poor dose of mandragorn, which, with the sleep that must needs follow, is all that Sir Hugh Robsart requires to settle his distraught brains.”

“I trust thou dealest fairly with me, Wayland?” said Tressilian.

“Most fairly and honestly, as the event shall shew,” replied the artist. “What would it avail me to harm the poor old man for whom you are interested? you, to whom I owe it, that Gaffer Pinniewinks is not even now rending my flesh and sinews with his accursed pincers, and probing every mole in my body with his sharpened awl, (a murrain on the hands which forged it!) in order to find out the witch’s mark! — I trust to yoke myself as a humble follower to your worship’s train, and I only wish to have my faith judged of by the result of the good Knight’s slumbers.”

Wayland Smith was right in his prognostication. The sedative draught which his skill had prepared, and Will Badger’s confidence had administered, was attended with the most beneficial effects. The patient’s sleep was long and healthful, and the poor old Knight awoke, humbled indeed in thought, and weak in frame, yet a much better judge of whatever was subjected to his intellect than he had been for some time past. He resisted for a while the proposal made by his friends, that Tressilian should undertake a journey to court, to attempt the recovery of his daughter, and the redress of her wrongs, in so far as they might yet be repaired.

„Let her go,” he said; „she is but a hawk that goes down the wind; I would not bestow even a whistle to reclaim her.” But though he for some time maintained this argument, he was at length convinced it was his duty to take the part to which natural affection inclined him, and consent that such efforts as could yet be made should be used by Tressilian in behalf of his daughter. He subscribed, therefore, a warrant of attorney, such as the Curate’s skill enabled him to draw up; for in these simple days the clergy were often the advisers of their flock in law, as well as in gospel.

All matters were prepared for Tressilian’s second departure, within twenty-four hours after he had returned to Lidcote Hall; but one material circumstance had been forgotten, which was first called to the remembrance of Tressilian by Master Mumblazen. „You are going to court, Master Tressilian,” said he; „you will please to remember, that your blazonry must be *argent*, and *or* — no other tinctures will pass current.” The remark was equally just and embarrassing. To prosecute a suit at court, ready money was as indispensable even in the golden days of Elizabeth as at any succeeding period; and it was a commodity little at the command of the inhabitants of Lidcote Hall. Tressilian was himself poor; the revenues of good

Sir Hugh Robsart were consumed, and even anticipated, in his hospitable mode of living; and it was finally necessary that the herald who started the doubt should himself solve it. Master Michael Mumblazen did so by producing a bag of money, containing nearly three hundred pounds in gold and silver of various coinage, the savings of twenty years; which he now, without speaking a syllable upon the subject, dedicated to the service of the patron whose shelter and protection had given him the means of making this little hoard. Tressilian accepted it without affecting a moment's hesitation, and a mutual grasp of the hand, was all that passed betwixt them, to express the pleasure which the one felt in dedicating his all to such a purpose, and that which the other received from finding so material an obstacle to the success of his journey so suddenly removed, and in a manner so unexpected.

While Tressilian was making preparations for his departure early the ensuing morning, Wayland Smith desired to speak with him; and, expressing his hope that he had been pleased with the operation of his medicine in behalf of Sir Hugh Robsart, added his desire to accompany him to court. This was indeed what Tressilian himself had several times thought of; for the shrewdness, alertness of understanding, and

variety of resource, which this fellow had exhibited during the time they had travelled together, had made him sensible that his assistance might be of importance. But then Wayland was in danger from the grasp of law; and of this Tressilian reminded him, mentioning something, at the same time, of the pincers of Pinniewinks, and the warrant of Master Justice Blindas. Wayland Smith laughed both to scorn.

"See you, sir!" said he, "I have changed my garb from that of a farrier to a serving-man; but were it still as it was, look at my moustaches — they now hang down — I will but turn them up and dye them with a tincture that I know of, and the devil would scarce know me again."

He accompanied these words with the appropriate action; and in less than a minute, by setting up his moustaches and his hair, he seemed a different person from him that had but now entered the room. Still, however, Tressilian hesitated to accept his services, and the artist became proportionally urgent.

"I owe you life and limb," he said, "and I would fain pay a part of the debt, especially as I know from Will Badger on what dangerous service your worship is bound. I do not indeed pretend to be what is called a man of mettle, one of those ruffling tear-cats, who maintain

their master's quarrel with sword and buckler. Nay, I am even one of those who hold the end of a feast better than the beginning of a fray. But I know that I can serve your worship better in such quest as yours, than any of these sword-and-daggersmen, and that my head will be worth an hundred of their hands."

Tressilian still hesitated. He knew not much of this strange fellow, and was doubtful how far he could repose in him the confidence necessary to render him an useful attendant upon the present emergency. Ere he had come to a determination, the trampling of a horse was heard in the court-yard, and Master Mumblazen and Will Badger both entered hastily into Tressilian's chamber, speaking almost at the same moment.

"Here is a serving-man on the bonniest grey tit I ever see'd in my life," said Will Badger, who got the start; — "having on his arm a silver cognisance, being a fire-drake holding in his mouth a brick-bat, under a coronet of an Earl's degree," said Master Mumblazen, "and bearing a letter sealed of the same."

Tressilian took the letter, which was addressed. "To the worshipful Master Edmund Tressilian our loving kinsman — These — Ride, ride, ride, — for thy life, for thy life, for thy

life." He then opened it, and found the following contents: —

"MASTER TRESSILIAN, OUR GOOD FRIEND AND
COUSIN,"

"We are at present so ill at ease, and otherwise so unhappily circumstanced, that we are desirous to have around us those of our friends, on whose loving kindness we can most especially repose confidence; amongst whom we hold our good Master Tressilian one of the foremost and nearest, both in good will and good ability. We therefore pray you, with your most convenient speed, to repair to our poor lodging, at Say's Court, near Deptford, where we will treat farther with you of matters which we deem it not fit to commit unto writing. And so we bid you heartily farewell, being your loving kinsman to command,

"RATCLIFFE, EARL OF SUSSEX."

"Send up the messenger instantly, Will Badger," said Tressilian; and as the man entered the room, he exclaimed, "Aha, Stevens, is it you? how does my good lord?"

"Ill, Master Tressilian," was the messenger's reply, "and having therefore the more need of good friends around him."

“But what is my lord’s malady?” said Tressilian anxiously, “I heard nothing of his being ill?”

“I know not, sir,” replied the man, “he is very ill at ease. The leeches are at a stand, and many of his household suspect foul practice; witchcraft, or worse.”

“What are the symptoms?” said Wayland Smith, stepping forward hastily.

“Anan?” said the messenger, not comprehending his meaning.

“What does he ail?” said Wayland; “where lies his disease?”

The man looked at Tressilian, as if to know whether he should answer these inquiries from a stranger, and receiving a sign in the affirmative, replied.

Stevens then hastily enumerated gradual loss of strength, nocturnal perspiration, loss of appetite, faintness, etc.

“Joined,” said Wayland, “to a gnawing pain in the stomach, and a low fever.”

“Even so,” said the messenger, somewhat surprised.

“I know how the disease is caused,” said the artist, “and I know the cause. Your master has eaten of the manna of Saint Nicholas. I know the cure too — my master shall not say I studied in his laboratory for nothing.”

"How mean you?" said Tressilian frowning, "we speak of one of the first nobles of England. Bethink you, this is no subject for buffoonery."

"God forbid!" said Wayland Smith. "I say that I know his disease, and can cure him. Remember what I did for Sir Hugh Robsart."

"We will set forth instantly," said Tressilian. "God calls us."

Accordingly, hastily mentioning this new motive for his instant departure, though without mentioning either the suspicions of Stevens, or the assurances of Wayland Smith, he took the kindest leave of Sir Hugh and the family at Lidcote-Hall, who accompanied him with prayers and blessings, and, attended by Wayland and the Earl of Sussex's domestic, travelled with the utmost speed towards London.

CHAPTER XIII.

— *Ay, I know you have arsenick,
Vitriol, sal-tartre, argaile, alkaly,
Cinoper: I know all. This fellow, Captain,
Will come in time to be a great distiller,
And give a say (I will not say directly,
But very near) at the philosopher's stone.*

The Alchemist.

TRESSILIAN and his attendants pressed their route with all dispatch. He had asked the smith, indeed, when their departure was resolved on, whether he would not rather chuse to avoid Berkshire, in which he had played a part so conspicuous. But Wayland returned a confident answer. He had employed the short interval they passed at Lidcote Hall in transforming himself in a wonderful manner. His wild and overgrown thicket of beard was now restrained to two small moustachios on the upper lip, turned up in a military fashion. A tailor from the village of Lidcote (well paid) had exerted his skill, under

his customer's directions, so as completely to alter Wayland's outward man, and take off from his appearance almost twenty years of age. Formerly, besmeared with soot and charcoal — overgrown with hair, and bent double with the nature of his labour — disfigured too by his odd and fantastic dress, he seemed a man of fifty years old. But now, in a handsome suit of Tressilian's livery, with a sword by his side, and a buckler on his shoulder, he looked like a gay ruffling serving-man, whose age might be betwixt thirty and thirty-five, the very prime of human life. His loutish savage-looking demeanour seemed equally changed, into a forward, sharp, and impudent alertness of look and action.

When challenged by Tressilian, who desired to know the cause of a metamorphosis so singular and so absolute, Wayland only answered by singing a stave from a comedy, which was then new, and was supposed, among the more favourable judges, to augur some genius on the part of the author. We are happy to preserve the couplet, which ran exactly thus, —

• Ban, ban, ca Caliban —

Get a new master — Be a new man.

Although Tressilian did not recollect the verses, yet they reminded him that Wayland had once been a stage-player, a circumstance which, of

itself, accounted indifferently well for the readiness with which he could assume so total a change of personal appearance. The artist himself was so confident of his disguise being completely changed, or of his having completely changed his disguise, which may be the more correct mode of speaking, that he regretted they were not to pass near his old place of retreat.

“I could venture,” he said, “in my present dress, and with your worship’s backing, to face Master Justice Blindas, even on a day of Quarter Sessions; and I would like to know what is become of Hobgoblin, who is like to play the devil in the world, if he can once slip the string, and leave his grannie and his Dominie. — Ay, and the scathed vault!” he said, “I would willingly have seen what havoc the explosion of so much gunpowder has made among Doctor Deme-trius Doboobie’s retorts and phials. I warrant me, my fame haunts the Vale of the White Horse long after my body is rotten; and that many a lout ties up his horse, lays down his silver groat, and pipes like a sailor whistling in a calm, for Wayland Smith to come and shoe his tit for him. But the horse will catch the founders ere I answer the call.”

In this particular, indeed, Wayland proved a true prophet; and so easily do fables rise, that an obscure tradition of his extraordinary practice

in farriery prevails in the Vale of White Horse even unto this day; * and neither the tradition of Alfred's Victory, nor of the celebrated Pusey Horn, are better preserved in Berkshire than the wild legend of Wayland Smith.

The haste of the travellers admitted their making no stay upon their journey, save what the refreshment of the horses required; and as many of the places through which they passed were under the influence of the Earl of Leicester, or persons immediately dependent on him, they thought it prudent to disguise their names, and the purpose of their journey. On such occasions the agency of Wayland Smith (by which name we will continue to distinguish the artist, though his real name was Lancelot Wayland) was extremely serviceable. He seemed, indeed, to have a pleasure in displaying the alertness with which he could baffle investigation, and amuse himself by putting the curiosity of tapsters and inn-keepers on a false scent. During the course of their brief journey, three different, and inconsistent reports were circulated by him on their account; namely, first, that Tressilian was the Lord Deputy of Ireland, come over in disguise to take the Queen's pleasure concerning

* See Camden's *Britannia*. — COUGH'S *Edition*, vol. I. p. 221.

the great rebel Rory Oge MacCarthy MacMakon; secondly, that the said Tressilian was an agent of Monsieur, coming to urge his suit to the hand of Elizabeth; thirdly, that he was the Duke of Medina, come over, incognito, to adjust the quarrel betwixt Philip and that princess.

Tressilian was angry, and expostulated with the artist on the various inconveniences, and, in particular, the unnecessary degree of attention to which they were subjected, by the figments he thus circulated; but he was pacified, (for who could be proof against such an argument?) by Wayland's assuring him that a general importance was attached to his own (Tressilian's) striking presence, which rendered it necessary to give an extraordinary reason for the rapidity and secrecy of his journey.

At length they approached the metropolis, where, owing to the more general recourse of strangers, their appearance excited neither observation nor inquiry, and finally they entered London itself.

It was Tressilian's purpose to go down directly to Deptford, where Lord Sussex resided, in order to be near the court, then held at Greenwich, the favourite residence of Elizabeth, and honoured as her birth-place. Still a brief halt in London was necessary; and it was somewhat prolonged by the earnest entreaties of Wayland

Smith, who desired permission to take a walk through the city.

“Take thy sword and buckler, and follow me, then,” said Tressilian; “I am about to walk myself, and we will go in company.”

This he said, because he was not altogether so secure of the fidelity of his new retainer, as to leave sight of him, at this interesting moment, when rival factions at the court of Elizabeth were running so high. Wayland Smith willingly acquiesced in the precaution, of which he probably conjectured the motive, but only stipulated, that his master should enter the shops of such chemists or apothecaries as he should point out, in walking through Fleet Street, and permit him to make some necessary purchases. Tressilian agreed, and obeying the signal of his attendant, walked successively into more than four or five shops, where he observed that Wayland purchased in each only one single drug, in various quantities. The medicines which he first asked for, were readily furnished, each in succession, but those which he afterwards required were less easily supplied — and Tressilian observed, that Wayland more than once, to the surprise of the shopkeeper, returned the gum or herb that was offered to him, and compelled him to exchange it for the right sort, or else went on to seek it elsewhere. But one ingredient, in particular,

seemed almost impossible to be found. Some chemists plainly admitted they had never seen it, — others denied that such a drug existed, excepting in the imagination of crazy alchemists, — and most of them attempted to satisfy their customer, by producing some substitute, which, when rejected by Wayland, as not being what he had asked for, they maintained possessed, in a superior degree, the self same qualities. In general, they all displayed some curiosity concerning the purpose for which he wanted it. One old meagre chemist, to whom the artist put the usual question, in terms which Tressilian neither understood, nor could recollect, answered frankly, there was none of that drug in London, unless Yoglan the Jew chanced to have some of it upon hand.

“I thought as much,” said Wayland. And as soon as they left the shop, he said to Tressilian. “I crave your pardon, sir, but no artist can work without his tools. I must needs go to this Yoglan’s; and I promise you, that if this detains you longer than your leisure seems to permit, you shall, nevertheless, be well repaid, by the use I will make of this rare drug. Permit me,” he added, “to walk before you, for we are now to quit the broad street, and we will make double speed if I lead the way.”

Tressilian acquiesced, and, following the smith

down a lane which turned to the left hand towards the river, he found that his guide walked on with great speed, and apparently perfect knowledge of the town, through a labyrinth of bye-streets, courts, and blind alleys, until at length Wayland paused in the midst of a very narrow lane, the termination of which shewed a peep of the Thames looking misty and muddy, which back-ground was crossed by the masts of two lighters that lay waiting for the tide. The shop under which he halted had not, as in modern days, a glazed window — but a paltry canvas screen surrounded such a stall as a cobbler now occupies, having the front open, much in the manner of a fish-monger's booth of the present day. A little old smock-faced man, the very reverse of a Jew in complexion, for he was very soft-haired as well as beardless, appeared, and with many courtesies, asked Wayland what he pleased to want. He had no sooner named the drug, than the Jew started and look surprised. “And vat might your vorship vant vith that drug which is not named, mein god, in forty years I have been chemist here?”

“These questions it is no part of my commission to answer,” said Wayland; “I only wish to know if you have what I want, and having it, are willing to sell it?”

“Ay, mein god, for having it that I have, and

for selling it I am chemist, and sell every drug." So saying, he exhibited a powder, and then continued, "But it will cost much monies — Vat I ave cost its weight in gold — ay, gold well-refined — I vill say six times — It comes from Mount Sinai, where we had our blessed Law given forth, and the plant blossoms but once in one hundred year."

"I do not know how often it is gathered on Mount Sinai," said Wayland, after looking at the drug offered him with great disdain, "but I will wager my sword and buckler against your gaberdine, that this trash you offer me instead of what I asked for, may be had for gathering on the castle-ditch at Aleppo."

"You are a rude man," said the Jew; "and besides, I ave no better than that — or if I ave, I will not sell it without order of a physician — or without you tell me vat you make of it."

The artist made brief answer in a language of which Tressilian could not understand a word, and which seemed to strike the Jew with the utmost astonishment. He stared upon Wayland like one who has suddenly recognized some mighty hero or dreaded potentate, in the person of an unknown and unmarked stranger. "Holy Elias!" he exclaimed, when he had recovered the first stunning effects of his surprise; and

then passing from his former suspicious and surly manner to the very extremity of obsequiousness, he cringed low to the artist, and besought him to enter his poor house, to bless his miserable threshold by crossing it.

“Vill you not taste a cup with the poor Jew, Zacharias Yoglan? — Vill you Tokay ave? — vill you Lachrymæ taste? — vill you” —

“You offend in your proffers,” said Wayland; “minister to me in what I require of you, and forbear further discourse.”

The rebuked Israelite took his bunch of keys, and opening with circumspection a cabinet which seemed more strongly secured than the other cases of drugs and medicines amongst which it stood, he drew out a little secret drawer, having a glass lid, and containing a small portion of a black powder. This he offered to Wayland, his manner conveying the deepest devotion towards him, though an avaricious and jealous expression which seemed to grudge every grain of what his customer was about to possess himself, disputed ground in his countenance, with the obsequious deference which he desired it should exhibit.

“Have you scales?” said Wayland.

The Jew pointed to those which lay ready for common use in the shop, but he did so with a puzzled expression of doubt and fear, which did not escape the artist.

“They must be other than these,” said Wayland sternly; “know you not that holy things lose their virtue if weighed in an unjust balance?”

The Jew hung his head, took from a steel-plated casket a pair of scales beautifully mounted, and said, as he adjusted them for the artist’s use, — “With these I do mine own experiment — one hair of the high-priest’s beard would turn them.”

“It suffices,” said the artist; and weighed out two drachms for himself of the black powder, which he very carefully folded up, and put into his pouch with the other drugs. He then demanded the price of the Jew, who answered, shaking his head and bowing. —

“No price — no, nothing at all from such as you. — But you will see the poor Jew again? you will look into his laboratory, where, God help him, he hath dried himself to the substance of the withered gourd of Jonah the holy prophet — You vill have pity on him, and shew him one little step on the great road?”

“Hush!” said Wayland, laying his finger mysteriously on his mouth, “it may be we shall meet again — thou hast already the *Schah majm*, as thine own Rabbis call it — the general creation; watch therefore, and pray, for thou must attain the knowledge of Alchahest Elixir, Sa-

mech, ere I may commune further with thee." Then returning with a slight nod the reverential congés of the Jew, he walked gravely up the lane, followed by his master, whose first observation on the scene he had just witnessed, was, that Wayland ought to have paid the man for his drug, whatever it was.

"I pay him?" said the artist; "May the foul fiend pay me if I do! — Had it not been that I thought it might displease your worship, I would have had an ounce or two of gold out of him, in exchange of the same just weight of brick-dust."

"I advise you to practise no such knavery while waiting upon me," said Tressilian.

"Did I not say," answered the artist, "that for that reason alone, I forbore him for the present. — Knavery, call you it? — why, yonder wretched skeleton hath wealth sufficient to pave the whole lane he lives in with dollars, yet scarce miss them out of his own iron chest; yet he goes mad after the philosopher's stone — and besides he would have cheated a poor serving-man, as he thought me at first, with trash that was not worth a penny — Match for match, quoth the devil to the collier; if his false medicine was worth my good crowns, my true brick-dust is as well worth his good gold."

"It may be so for aught I know," said Tressi-

lian, «in dealing amongst Jews and apothecaries; but understand, that to have such tricks of legerdemain practised by one attending on me, diminishes my honour, and that I will not permit them. I trust thou hast made up thy purchases?"

«I have, sir," replied WWayland; «and with these drugs will I, this very day, compound the true orvietan, that noble medicine which is so seldom found genuine and effective within these realms of Europe, for want of that most rare and precious drug which I got but now from Yoglan."

«But why not have made all your purchases at one shop?" said his master; «we have lost nearly an hour in running from one pounder of simples to another."

«Content you, sir," said WWayland. «No man shall learn my secret; and it would not be mine long, were I to buy all my materials from one chemist."

They now returned to their inn, (the famous Bell-Savage) and while the Lord Sussex's servant prepared the horses for their journey, WWayland, obtaining from the cook the service of a mortar, shut himself up in a private chamber, where he mixed, pounded, and amalgamated the drugs which he had bought, each in its due proportion, with a readiness and address that plainly

shewed him well practised in all the manual operations of pharmacy.

By the time Wayland's electuary was prepared the horses were ready, and a short hour's riding brought them to the present habitation of Lord Sussex, an ancient house, called Say's Court, near Deptford, which had long pertained to a family of that name, but had, for upwards of a century, been possessed by the ancient and honourable family of Evelyn. The present representative of that ancient house took a deep interest in the Earl of Sussex, and had willingly accommodated both him and his numerous retinue in his hospitable mansion. Say's Court was afterwards the residence of the celebrated Mr Evelyn, whose "Silva" is still the manual of British planters; and whose life, manners, and principles, as illustrated in his Memoirs, ought equally to be the manual of English gentlemen.


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CHAPTER XIV.

*This is rare news thou tell'st me, my good  
fellow;*

*There are two bulls fierce battling on the  
green*

*For one fair heifer — it the one goes down  
The dale will be more peaceful, and the herd,  
Which have small interest in their brulzie-  
ment,*

*May pasture there in peace.*

*Old Play.*

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SAY'S COURT was watched like a beleaguered fort; and so high rose the suspicions of the time, that Tressilian and his attendants were stopped and questioned repeatedly by centinels, both on foot and horse-back, as they approached the abode of the sick Earl. In truth, the high rank which Sussex held in Queen Elizabeth's favour,



and his known and avowed rivalry of the Earl of Leicester, caused the utmost importance to be attached to his welfare; for, at that period we treat of, all men doubted whether he or the Earl of Leicester might ultimately have the higher rank in her regard.

Elizabeth, like many of her sex, was fond of governing by factions, so as to balance two opposing interests, and reserve in her own hand the power of making either predominate, as the interest of the state, or perhaps as her own female caprice, (for to that foible even she was not superior,) might finally determine. To finesse — to hold the cards — to oppose one interest to another — to bridle him who thought himself highest in her esteem, by the fears he must entertain of another equally trusted, if not equally beloved, were arts which she used through her reign, and which enabled her, though frequently giving way to the weakness of favouritism, to prevent most of its evil effects on her kingdom and government.

The two nobles, who at present stood as rivals in her favour, possessed very different pretensions to share it; yet it might be in general said, that the Earl of Sussex had been most serviceable to the queen, while Leicester was most dear to the woman. Sussex was, according to the phrase of the times, a martialist; had done



good service in Ireland. and in Scotland, and especially in the great northern rebellion, in 1569, which was quelled, in a great measure, by his military talents. He was, therefore, naturally surrounded and looked up to by those who wished to make arms their road to distinction. The Earl of Sussex, moreover, was of more ancient and honourable descent than his rival, uniting in his person the representation of the Fitz Walters, as well as of the Ratcliffes, while the scutcheon of Leicester was stained by the degradation of his grandfather, the oppressive minister of Henry VII., and scarce improved by that of his father, the unhappy Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, executed on Tower-Hill, August 22, 1553. But in person, features, and address, weapons so formidable in the court of a female sovereign, Leicester had advantage more than sufficient to counterbalance the military services, high blood, and frank bearing of the Earl of Sussex; and he bore in the eye of the court and kingdom, the higher share in Elizabeth's favour, though (for such was her uniform policy) by no means so decidedly expressed, as to warrant him against the final preponderance of his rival's pretensions. The illness of Sussex therefore happened so opportunely for Leicester, as to give rise to strange surmises among the public; while the followers of the



one Earl were filled with the deepest apprehensions, and those of the other with the highest hopes of its probable issue. Meanwhile, — for in that old time men never forgot the probability that the matter might be determined by length of sword, — the retainers of each noble flocked around their patron, appeared well armed in the vicinity of the court itself, and disturbed the ear of the sovereign by their frequent and alarming debates, held even within the precincts of her palace. This preliminary statement is necessary, to render what follows intelligible to the reader.

On Tressilian's arrival at Say's Court, he found the place filled with the retainers of the Earl of Sussex, and of the gentlemen who came to attend their patron in his illness. Arms were in every hand, and a deep gloom on every countenance, as if they had apprehended an immediate and violent assault from the opposite faction. In the hall, however, to which Tressilian was ushered by one of the Earl's attendants, while another went to inform Sussex of his arrival, he found only two gentlemen in waiting. There was a remarkable contrast betwixt their dress, appearance, and manners. The attire of the elder gentleman, a person as it seemed of quality and in the prime of life, was very plain and soldier-like, his stature low,



and his features of that kind which express sound common sense, without a grain of vivacity or imagination. The younger, who seemed about twenty, or upwards, was clad in the gayest habit used by persons of quality at the period, wearing a crimson velvet cloak richly ornamented with lace and embroidery, with a bonnet of the same, encircled with a gold chain turned three times round it, and secured by a medal. His hair was adjusted very nearly like that of some fine gentlemen of our own time, that is, it was combed upwards, and made to stand as it were on end, and in his ears he wore a pair of silver ear-rings, having each a pearl of considerable size. The countenance of this youth, besides being regularly handsome and accompanied by a fine person, was animated and striking in a degree that seemed to speak at once the firmness of a decided and the fire of an enterprising character, the power of reflection, and the promptitude of determination.

Both these gentlemen reclined nearly in the same posture on benches near each other; but each seeming engaged in his own meditations, looked straight upon the wall which was opposite to them, without speaking to his companion. The looks of the elder were of that sort, which convinced the beholder, that, in looking on the wall, he saw no more than the side of an old



hall hung around with cloaks, antlers, bucklers, old pieces of armour, partizans, and the similar articles which were usually the furniture of such a place. The look of the younger gallant had in it something imaginative; he was sunk in reverie, and it seemed as if the empty space of air betwixt him and the wall, were the stage of a theatre on which his fancy was mustering his own dramatis personæ, and treating him with sights far different from those which his awakened and earthly vision could have offered.

At the entrance of Tressilian both started from their musing, and bade him welcome; the younger, in particular, with great appearance of animation and cordiality.

«Thou art welcome, Tressilian,” said the youth; «thy philosophy stole thee from us when this household had objects of ambition to offer — it is an honest philosophy, since it returns thee to us, when there are only dangers to be shared.”

«Is my lord, then, so dangerously indisposed?” said Tressilian.

«We fear the very worst,” answered the elder gentleman, «and by the worst practice.”

«Fye,” replied Tressilian, «my Lord of Leicester is honourable.”

«What doth he with such attendants, then, as he hath about him?” said the younger gallant. «The man who raises the devil may be



honest, but he is answerable for the mischief which the fiend does, for all that."

"And is this all that are of you, my mates," said Tressilian, "that are about my lord in his utmost straits?"

"No, no," replied the elder gentleman, "there are Tracy, Markham, and several more; but we keep watch here by two at once, and some are weary and are sleeping in the gallery above."

"And some," said the young man, "are gone down to the Dock yonder at Deptford, to look out such a hulk as they may purchase by clubbing their broken fortunes; and so soon as all is over, we will lay our noble lord in a noble green grave, have a blow at those who have hurried him thither, if opportunity suits, and then sail for the Indies with hearts as light as our purses."

"It may be," said Tressilian, "and I will embrace the same purpose, so soon as I have settled some business at court."

"Thou business at court!" they both exclaimed at once; "and thou make the Indian voyage!"

"Why, Tressilian," said the younger man, "art thou not wedded, and beyond these flaws of fortune, that drive folks out to sea when their bark bears fairest for the heaven? — What has



become of the lovely Indamira that was to match my Amoret for truth and beauty?"

"Speak not of her!" said Tressilian, averting his face.

"Ay, stands it so with you?" said the youth, taking his hand very affectionately; "then, fear not I will again touch the green wound — But it is strange as well as sad news. Are none of our fair and merry fellowship to escape shipwreck of fortune and happiness in this sudden tempest? I had hoped thou wert in harbour, at least, my dear Edmund — But truly says another dear friend of thy name,

'What man that sees the ever whirling wheel  
Of Chance, the which all mortal things doth  
sway;

But that thereby doth find and plainly feel,  
How Mutability in them doth play  
Her cruel sports to many men's decay.'"

The elder gentleman had risen from his bench, and was pacing the hall with some impatience, while the youth, with much earnestness and feeling, recited these lines. When he had done, the other wrapped himself in his cloak, and again stretched himself down, saying, "I marvel, Tressilian, you will feed the lad in this silly humour. If there were aught to draw a judg-



ment upon a virtuous and honourable household like my lord's, renounce me if I think not it were this piping, whining, childish trick of poetry that came among us with Master Walter Wittypate here and his comrades, twisting into all manner of uncouth and incomprehensible forms of speech the honest plain English phrase which God gave us to express our meaning withal."

"Blount believes," said his comrade, laughing, "the devil woo'd Eve in rhyme, and that the mystic meaning of the Tree of Knowledge, refers solely to the art of clashing rhymes and meting out hexameters."

At this moment the Earl's chamberlain entered, and informed Tressilian that his lord required to speak with him.

He found Lord Sussex dressed, but unbraced and lying on his couch, and was shocked at the alteration, disease had made in his person. The Earl received him with the most friendly cordiality, and inquired into the state of his courtship. Tressilian evaded his inquiries for a moment, and turning his discourse on the Earl's own health, he discovered, to his surprise, that the symptoms of his disorder corresponded minutely with those which Wayland had predicated concerning it. He hesitated not, therefore, to communicate to Sussex the whole history of his attendant, and the pretensions he set up to



cure the disorder under which he laboured. The Earl listened with incredulous attention until the name of Demetrius was mentioned, and then suddenly called to his secretary to bring him a certain casket which contained papers of importance. "Take out from thence," he said, "the declaration of the rascal cook whom we had under examination, and look heedfully if the name of Demetrius be not there mentioned."

The secretary turned to the passage at once, and read, "And said declarant, being examined, saith, That he remembers having made the sauce to the said sturgeon-fish, after eating of which, the said noble Lord was taken ill; and he put the usual ingredients and condiments therein, namely." —

"Pass over his trash," said the Earl, "and see whether he had not been supplied with his materials by a herbalist called Demetrius."

"It is even so," answered the secretary. "And he adds, he has not since seen the said Demetrius."

"This accords with thy fellow's story, Tressilian," said the Earl; "call him hither."

On being summoned to the Earl's presence, Wayland Smith told his former tale with firmness and consistency.

"It may be," said the Earl, "thou art sent by those who have begun this work, to end it for



them; but bethink, if I miscarry under thy medicine, it may go hard with thee."

"That were severe measure," said Wayland, "since the issue of medicine, and the end of life, are in God's disposal. But I will stand the risk. I have not lived so long under ground, to be afraid of a grave."

"Nay, if thou be'st so confident," said the Earl of Sussex, "I will take the risk too, for the learned can do nothing for me. Tell me how this medicine is to be taken."

"That will I do presently," said Wayland; "but allow me to condition that, since I incur all the risk of this treatment, no other physician shall be permitted to interfere with it."

"That is but fair," replied the Earl; "and now prepare your drug."

While Wayland obeyed the Earl's commands, his servants, by the artist's direction, undressed their master, and placed him in bed.

"I warn you," he said, "that the first operation of this medicine will be to produce a heavy sleep, during which time the chamber must be kept undisturbed; as the consequences may otherwise be fatal. I myself will watch by the Earl, with any of the gentleman of his chamber."

Let all leave the room, save Stanley and this good fellow," said the Earl.

"And saving me also," said Tressilian. "I  
LXXV.



too am deeply interested in the effects of this potion."

"Be it so, good friend," said the Earl; "and now for our experiment; but first call my secretary and chamberlain."

"Bear witness," he continued, when these officers arrived, "bear witness for me, gentlemen, that our honourable friend Tressilian is in no way responsible for the effects which this medicine may produce upon me, the taking it being my own free action and choice, in regard I believe it to be a remedy which God has furnished me by unexpected means, to recover me of my present malady. Commend me to my noble and princely Mistress; and say, that I live and die her true servant, and wish to all about her throne the same singleness of heart and will to serve her, with more ability to do so than hath been assigned to poor Thomas Ratcliffe."

He then folded his hands, and seemed for a second or two absorbed in mental devotion, then took the potion in his hand, and, pausing, regarded Wayland with a look that seemed designed to penetrate his very soul, but which caused no anxiety or hesitation in the countenance or manner of the artist.

"Here is nothing to be feared," said Sussex to Tressilian; and swallowed the medicine without farther hesitation.



“I am now to pray your lordship,” said Wayland, “to dispose yourself to rest as commodiously as you can; and of you, gentlemen, to remain as still and mute as if you waited at your mother’s death-bed.”

The chamberlain and secretary then withdrew, giving orders that all doors be bolted, and all noise in the house strictly prohibited. Several gentlemen were voluntary watchers in the hall, but none remained in the chamber of the sick Earl, save his groom of the chamber, Stanley, the artist, and Tressilian. — Wayland Smith’s predictions were speedily accomplished, and a sleep fell upon the Earl, so deep and sound, that they who watched his bed-side began to fear, that, in his weakened state, he might pass away without awakening from his lethargy. Wayland Smith himself appeared anxious, and felt the temples of the Earl slightly, from time to time, attending particularly to the state of respiration, which was full and deep, but at the same time easy and uninterrupted.

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## CHAPTER XV.

*You logger-headed and unpolish'd grooms,  
What, no attendance, no regard, no duty?  
Where is the foolish knave I sent before?*

*Taming of the Shrew.*

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THERE is no period at which men look worse in the eyes of each other, or feel more uncomfortable, than when the first dawn of daylight finds them watchers. Even a beauty of the first order, after the vigils of a ball are interrupted by the dawn, would do wisely to withdraw herself from the gaze of her fondest and most partial admirers. Such was the pale, inauspicious, and ungrateful light, which began to beam upon those who kept watch all night, in the hall at Say's Court, and which mingled its cold pale blue diffusion with the red, yellow, and smoky beams of expiring lamps and torches. The young



gallant, whom we noticed in our last Chapter, had left the room for a few minutes, to learn the cause of a knocking at the outward gate, and on his return, was so struck with the forlorn and ghastly aspects of his companions of the watch, that he exclaimed, "Pity of my heart, my masters, how like owls you look! Methinks, when the sun rises, I shall see you flutter off with your eyes dazzled, to stick yourselves into the next ivy-tod or ruined steeple."

"Hold thy peace, thou gibing fool," said Blount, "hold thy peace. Is this a time for jeering, when the manhood of England is perchance dying within a wall's breadth of thee?"

"There thou liest," replied the gallant.

"How, lie!" exclaimed Blount, starting up, "lie, and to me?"

"Why, so thou didst, thou peevish fool," answered the youth; "thou didst lie on that bench even now, didst thou not? But art thou not a hasty coxcomb, to pick up a wry word so wrathfully? Nevertheless, loving and honouring my lord as truly as thou, or any one, I do say, that should Heaven take him from us, all England's manhood dies not with him."

"Ay," replied Blount, "a good portion will survive with thee, doubtless."

"And a good portion with thyself, Blount, and with stout Markham here, and Tracy, and



all of us. But I am he will best employ the talent heaven has given to us all."

"As how, I prithee?" said Blount; "tell us your mystery of multiplying."

"Why, sirs," answered the youth, "ye are like goodly land, which bears no crop because it is not quickened by manure; but I have that rising spirit in me, which will make my poor faculties labour to keep pace with it. My ambition will keep my brain at work, I warrant thee."

"I pray to God it does not drive thee mad," said Blount; "for my part, if we lose our noble lord, I bid adieu to the court and to the camp both. I have five hundred fowl acres in Norfolk, and thither will I, and change the court pantoufle for the country hobnail."

"O base transmutation!" exclaimed his antagonist; "thou hast already got the true rustic slouch — thy shoulders stoop, as if thine hands were at the stilts of the plough, and thou hast a kind of earthy smell about thee, instead of being perfumed with essence, as a gallant and courtier should. On my soul, thou hast stolen out to roll thyself on a hay mow. Thy only excuse will be to swear by thy hilts, that the farmer had a fair daughter."

"I pray thee, Walter," said another of the company, "cease thy raillery, which suits nei-



ther time nor place, and tell us who was at the gate just now."

"Doctor Masters, physician to her Grace in ordinary, sent by her especial orders to inquire after the Earl's health," answered Walter.

"Ha! what!" exclaimed Tracy, "that was no slight mark of favour; if the Earl can but come through, he will match with Leicester yet. Is Masters with my lord at present?"

"Nay," replied Walter, "he is half way back to Greenwich by this time, and in high dudgeon."

"Thou didst not refuse him admittance?" exclaimed Tracy.

"Thou wert not surely so mad?" ejaculated Blount.

"I refused him admittance as flatly, Blount, as you would refuse a penny to a blind beggar; as obstinately, Tracy, as thou didst ever deny access to a dun."

"Why, in the fiend's name, didst thou trust him to go to the gate?" said Blount to Tracy.

"It suited his years better than mine," answered Tracy; "but he has undone us all now thoroughly. My lord may live or die, he will never have a look of favour from her Majesty again."

"Nor the means of making fortunes for his followers," said the young gallant, smiling con-



temptuously; — «there lies the sore point, that will brook no handling. My good sirs, I sounded my lamentations over my lord somewhat less loudly than some of you; but when the point comes of doing him service, I will yield to none of you. Had this learned leech entered, thinkst thou not there had been such a coil betwixt him and Tressilian's mediciner, that not the sleeper only, but the very dead might have awakened? I know what 'larum belongs to the discord of doctors.»

«And who is to take the blame of opposing the Queen's orders?» said Tracy; «for undeniably, Doctor Masters came with her Grace's positive commands to cure the Earl.»

«I, who have done the wrong, will bear the blame,» said Walter.

«Thus, then, off fly the dreams of court favour thou hast nourished,» said Blount; «and despite all thy boasted art and ambition, Devonshire will see thee shine a true younger brother, fit to sit low at the board, carve turnabout with the chaplain, look that hounds be fed, and see the squire's girths drawn when he goes a hunting.»

«Not so,» said the young man, colouring. «not while Ireland and the Netherlands have wars, and not while the sea hath pathless waves. The rich West hath lands undreamed of,



and Britain contains bold hearts to venture on the quest of them. — Adieu for a space, my masters. I go to walk in the court and look to the centinels.”

“The lad hath quicksilver in his veins, that is certain,” said Blount, looking at Markham.

“He hath that both in brain and blood,” said Markham, “wich may either make or mar him. But, in closing the door against Masters, he hath done a daring and loving piece of service; for Tressilian’s fellow hath ever averred, that to wake the Earl were death, and Masters would wake the Seven Sleepers themselves, if he thought they slept not by the regular ordinance of medicine.”

Morning was well advanced, when Tressilian fatigued and over-watched, came down to the hall with the joyful intelligence, that the Earl had awakened of himself, that he found his internal complaints much mitigated, and spoke with a cheerfulness, and looked round with a vivacity, which of themselves shewed a material and favourable change had taken place. Tressilian at the same time commanded the attendance of one or two of his followers, to report what had passed during the night, and to relieve the watchers in the Earl’s chamber.

When the message of the Queen was communicated to the Earl of Sussex, he at first smiled



at the repulse which the physician had received from his zealous young follower, but instantly recollecting himself, he commanded Blount, his master of the horse, instantly to take boat, and go down the river to the Palace of Greenwich, taking young Walter and Tracy with him, and make a suitable compliment, expressing his grateful thanks to his Sovereign, and mentioning the cause why he had not been enabled to profit by the assistance of the wise and learned Doctor Masters.

“A plague on it,” said Blount, as he descended the stairs, “had he sent me with a cartel to Leicester, I think I should have done his errand indifferently well. But to go to our gracious Sovereign, before whom all words must be lackered over either with gilding or with sugar, is such a confectionary matter as clean baffles my poor old English brain. — Come with me, Tracy, and come you too, Master Walter Wittypate, that art the cause of our having all this ado. Let us see if thy neat brain, that frames so many flashy fireworks, can help out a plain fellow at need with some of thy shrewd devices.”

“Never fear, never fear,” exclaimed the youth, “it is I will help you through — let me but fetch my cloak.”



“Why, thou hast it on thy shoulders,” said Blount — “the lad is mazed.”

“No, this is Tracy’s old mantle,” answered Walter; “I go not with thee to court unless as a gentleman should.”

“Why,” said Blount, “thy braveries are like to dazzle the eyes of none but some poor groom or porter.”

“I know that,” said the youth; “but I am resolved I will have my own cloak, ay, and brush my doublet to boot, ere I stir forth with you.”

“Well, well,” said Blount, “here is a coil about a doublet and a cloak — get thyself ready, a God’s name.”

They were soon launched on the princely bosom of the broad Thames, upon which the sun now shone forth in all its splendour.

“There are two things scarce matched in the universe,” said Walter to Blount, — “the sun in heaven, and the Thames on the earth.”

“The one will light us to Greenwich well enough,” said Blount, “and the other would take us there a little faster if it were ebb tide.”

“And this is all thou think’st — all thou carest — all thou deem’st the use of the King of Elements, and the King of Rivers, to guide three such poor caitiffs, as thyself, and me, and Tracy, upon an idle journey of courtly ceremony!”



“It is no errand of my seeking, faith,” replied Blount, “and I could excuse both the sun and the Thames, the trouble of carrying me where I have no great mind to go; and where I expect but dog’s wages for my trouble — And by my honour,” he added, looking out from the head of the boat, “it seems to me as if our message were a sort of labour in vain; for see, the Queen’s barge lies at the stairs, as if her Majesty were about to take water.”

It was even so. The royal barge, manned with the Queen’s watermen, richly attired in the regal liveries, and having the banner of England displayed, did indeed lie at the great stairs which ascended from the river, and along with it two or three other boats for transporting such part of her retinue as were not in immediate attendance on the royal person. The yeomen of the guard, the tallest and most handsome men whom England could produce, guarded with their halberts the passage from the palace-gate to the river side, and all seemed in readiness for the Queen’s coming forth, although the day was yet so early.

“By my faith, this bodes us no good,” said Blount; “it must be some perilous cause puts her Grace in motion thus untimely. By my counsel, we were best put back again, and tell the Earl what we have seen.”



“Tell the Earl what we have seen!” said Walter, “why, what have we seen but a boat, and men with scarlet jerkins, and halberts in their hands? Let us do his errand, and tell him what the Queen says in reply.”

So saying, he caused the boat pull towards a landing-place at some distance from the principal one, which it would not, at that moment, have been thought respectful to approach, and jumped on shore, followed, though with reluctance, by his cautious and timid companion, Blount. As they approached the gate of the place, one of the serjeant porters told them they could not at present enter, as her Majesty was in the act of coming forth. The gentlemen used the name of the Earl of Sussex; but it proved no charm to subdue the officer, who alleged in reply, that it was as much as his post was worth, to disobey in the least tittle the commands which he had received,

“Nay, I told you as much before,” said Blount; “do, I pray you, my dear Walter, let us take boat and return.”

“Not till I see the Queen come forth,” returned the youth, composedly.

“Thou art mad, stark mad, by the mass,” answered Blount.

“And thou,” said Walter, “art turned coward of the sudden. I have seen thee face half a score



of shag-headed Irish kernes to thy own share of them, and now thou would'st blink and go back to shun the frown of a fair lady!"

At this moment the gates opened, and ushers began to issue forth in array, preceeded and flanked by the band of Gentlemen Pensioners. After this, amid a crowd of lords and ladies, yet so disposed around her that she could see and be seen on all sides, came Elizabeth herself, then in the prime of womanhood, and in the full glow of what in a Sovereign was called beauty, and who would in the lowest rank of life have been truly judged a noble figure, joined to a striking and commanding physiognomy. She leant on the arm of Lord Hunsdon, whose relation to her by her mother's side often procured him such distinguished marks of Elizabeth's intimacy.

The young cavalier we have so often mentioned had probably never yet approached so near the person of his Sovereign, and he pressed forward as far as the line of warders permitted, in order to avail himself of the present opportunity. His companion, on the contrary, cursing his imprudence, kept drawing him backwards, till Walter shook him off impatiently, and letting his rich cloak drop carelessly from one shoulder; a natural action, which served, however, to display to the best advantage his well-



proportioned person. Unbonneting at the same time, he fixed his eager gaze on the Queen's approach, with a mixture of respectful curiosity, and modest yet ardent admiration, which suited so well with his fine features, that the warders, struck with his rich attire and noble countenance, suffered him to approach the ground over which the Queen was to pass, somewhat closer than was permitted to ordinary spectators. Thus the adventurous youth stood full in Elizabeth's eye, — an eye never indifférent to the admiration which she deservedly excited among her subjects, or to the fair proportions of external form which chanced to distinguish any of her courtiers. Accordingly, she fixed her keen glance on the youth, as she approached the place where he stood, with a look in which surprise at his boldness seemed to be unmingled with resentment, while a trifling accident happened which attracted her attention towards him yet more strongly. The night had been rainy, and just where the young gentleman stood, a small quantity of mud interrupted the Queen's passage. As she hesitated to pass on, the gallant, throwing his cloak from his shoulders, laid it in on the miry spot, so as to ensure her stepping over it dryshod. Elizabeth looked at the young man, who accompanied this act of devoted courtesy with a profound re-



verence, and a blush that overspread his whole countenance. The Queen was confused, and blushed in her turn, nodded her head, hastily passed on, and embarked in her barge without saying a word.

“Come along, Sir Coxcomb,” said Blount; “your gay cloak will need the brush to-day, I wot. Nay, if you had meant to make a foot-cloth of your mantle, better have kept Tracy’s old drap-de-burée, which despises all colours.”

“This cloak,” said the youth, taking it up and folding it, “shall never be brushed while in my possession.”

“And that will not be long, if you learn not a little more economy — we shall have you in *cuerpo* soon, as the Spaniard says.”

Their discourse was here interrupted by one of the Band of Pensioners.

“I was sent,” said he, after looking at them attentively, “to a gentleman who hath no cloak, or a muddy one. — You sir, I think,” addressing the younger cavalier, “are the man; you will please to follow me.”

“He is in attendance on me,” said Blount, “on me, the noble Earl of Sussex’s master of horse.”

“I have nothing to say to that,” answered the messenger; “my orders are directly from her Majesty, and concern this gentleman only.”



So saying, he walked away, followed by Walter, leaving Blount behind, with his eyes almost starting from his head with the excess of his astonishment. At length he gave vent to it in an exclamation — “Who the good jere would have thought this!” And shaking his head with a mysterious air, he walked to his own boat, embarked, and returned to Deptford.

The young cavalier was, in the meanwhile, guided to the water-side by the Pensioner, who shewed him considerable respect; a circumstance which, to persons in his situation, may be considered as an augury of no small consequence. He ushered him into one of the wherries which lay ready to attend the Queen’s barge, which was already proceeding up the river, with the advantage of that flood-tide, of which, in the course of their descent, Blount had complained to his associates.

The two rowers used their oars with such expedition at the signal of the Gentleman Pensioner, that they very soon brought their little skiff under the stern of the Queen’s boat where she sate beneath an awning, attended by two or three ladies, and the nobles of her household. She looked more than once at the wherry in which the young adventurer was seated, spoke to those around her, and seemed to laugh. At length one of the attendants, by the Queen’s



order apparently, made a sign for the wherry to come along-side, and the young man was desired to step from his own skiff into the Queen's barge, which he performed with graceful agility at the fore part of the boat, and was brought aft to the Queen's presence, the wherry at the same time dropping into the rear. The youth underwent the gaze of majesty, not the less gracefully that his self-possession was mingled with embarrassment. The mudded cloak still hung upon his arm, and formed the natural topic with which the Queen introduced the conversation.

"You have this day spoiled a gay mantle in our service, young man. We thank you for your service, though the manner of offering it was unusual, and something bold."

"In a sovereign's need," answered the youth, "it is each liege-man's duty to be bold."

"God's pity! that was well said, my lord," said the Queen, turning to a grave person who sate by her, and answered with a grave inclination of the head, and something of a mumbled assent. "Well, young man, your gallantry shall not go unrewarded. Go to the wardrobe-keeper, and he shall have orders to supply the suit which you have cast away in our service. Thou shalt have a suit, and that of the newest cut, I promise thee, on the word of a princess."



“May it please your grace,” said Walter, hesitating, “it is not for so humble a servant of your majesty to measure out your bounties; but if it became me to chuse” —

“Thou would’st have gold, I warrant me,” said the Queen, interrupting him; “fie, young man! I take shame to say, that, in our capital, such and so various are the means of thriftless folly, that to give gold to youth is giving fuel to fire, and furnishing them with the means of self-destruction. If I live and reign, these means of unchristian excess shall be abridged. Yet thou may’st be poor,” she added, “or thy parents may be — It shall be gold, if thou wilt, but thou shalt answer to me for the use on’t.”

Walter waited patiently until the Queen had done, and then modestly assured her, that gold was still less in his wish than the raiment her majesty had before offered.

“How, boy!” said the Queen, “neither gold nor garment? What is it thou would’st have of me, then?”

“Only permission, Madam — if it is not asking too high an honour — permission to wear the cloak which did you this trifling service.”

“Permission to wear thine own cloak, thou silly boy!” said the Queen.

“It is no longer mine,” said Walter; “when your Majesty’s foot touched it, it became a fit



mantle for a prince, but far too rich a one for its former owner."

The Queen again blushed; and endeavoured to cover, by laughing, a slight degree of not unpleasing surprise and confusion.

"Heard you ever the like, my lords? The youth's head is turned with reading romances — I must know something of him, that I may send him safe to his friends. — What art thou?"

"A gentleman of the household of the Earl of Sussex, so please your grace, sent hither with his Master of Horse, upon a message to your Majesty."

In a moment the gracious expression which Elizabeth's face had hitherto maintained, gave way to an expression of haughtiness and severity.

"My Lord of Sussex," she said, "has taught us how to regard his messages, by the value he places upon ours. We sent but this morning the physician in ordinary of our chamber, and that at no usual time, understanding his lordship's illness to be more dangerous than we had before apprehended. There is at no court in Europe a man more skilled in his holy and most useful science than Doctor Masters, and he came from Us to our subject. Nevertheless, he found the gate of Say's Court defended by men with culverins, as if it had been on



the Borders of Scotland, not in the vicinity of our court; and when he demanded admittance in our name, it was stubbornly refused. For this slight of a kindness, which had but too much of condescension in it, we will receive, at present at least, no excuse; and some such we suppose to have been the purport of my Lord of Sussex's message."

This was uttered in a tone, and with a gesture, which made Lord Sussex's friends who were within hearing tremble. He to whom the speech was addressed, however, trembled not; but with great deference and humility, as soon as the Queen's passion gave him an opportunity, he replied: — "So please your most gracious Majesty, I was charged with no apology from the Earl of Sussex."

"With what were you then charged, sir?" said the Queen, with the impetuosity, which, amid nobler qualities, strongly marked her character; "was it with a justification? — or, God's death! with a defiance?"

"Madam," said the young man, "my Lord of Sussex knew the offence approached towards treason, and could think of nothing save of securing the offender, and placing him in your Majesty's hands, and at your mercy. The noble Earl was fast asleep when your most gracious message reached him, a potion having been ad-



ministered to that purpose by his physician; and his lordship knew not of the ungracious repulse your Majesty's royal and most comfortable message had received, until after he awoke this morning."

"And which of his domestics then, in the name of heaven, presumed to reject my message, without even admitting my own physician to the presence of him whom I sent him to attend?" said the Queen, much surprised.

"The offender, Madam, is before you," replied Walter, bowing very low; "the full and sole blame is mine; and my lord has most justly sent me to abye the consequences of a fault, of which he is as innocent as a sleeping man's dreams can be of a waking man's actions."

"What, was it thou? — thou thyself, that repelled my messenger and my physician from Say's Court?" said the Queen. "What could occasion such boldness in one who seems devoted — that is, whose exterior bearing shews devotion — to his Sovereign?"

"Madam," said the youth, — who, notwithstanding an assumed appearance of severity, thought that he saw something in the Queen's face that resembled not implacability, — "we say in our country, that the physician is for the time the liege sovereign of his patient. Now, my noble master was then under dominion of a



leech, by whose advice he hath greatly profited, who had issued his commands that his patient should not that night be disturbed, on the very peril of his life."

"Thy master hath trusted some false varlet of an empiric," said the Queen.

"I know not, Madam, but by the fact, that he is now — this very morning — awakened much refreshed and strengthened, from the only sleep he hath had for many hours."

The nobles looked at each other, but more with the purpose to see what each thought of this news, than to exchange any remarks on what had happened. The Queen answered hastily, and without affecting to disguise her satisfaction, "By my word, I am glad he is better. But thou wert over bold to deny the access of my Doctor Masters. Know'st thou not the Holy Writ saith, in the multitude of counsel there is safety?"

"Ay, Madam," said Walter, "but I have heard learned men say, that the safety spoken of is for the physicians, not for the patient."

"By my faith, child, thou hast pushed me home," said the Queen, laughing; "for my Hebrew learning does not come quite at a call. — How say you, my Lord of Lincoln? Hath the lad given a just interpretation of the text?"

"The word *safety*, most gracious Madam,"



said the Bishop of Lincoln, "for so hath been translated, it may be somewhat hastily, the Hebrew word, being" —

"My lord," said the Queen, interrupting him, "we said we had forgotten our Hebrew. But for thee, young man, what is thy name and birth?"

"Raleigh is my name, most gracious Queen, the youngest son of a large but honourable family of Devonshire."

"Raleigh?" said Elizabeth, after a moment's recollection, "have we not heard of your service in Ireland?"

"I have been so fortunate as to do some service there, Madam," replied Raleigh, "scarce, however, of consequence sufficient to reach your Grace's ears."

"They hear farther than you think of," said the Queen graciously, "and have heard of a youth who defended a ford in Shannon against a whole band of wild Irish rebels, until the stream ran purple with their blood and his own."

"Some blood I may have lost," said the youth, looking down, "but it was where my best is due; and that is in your Majesty's service."

The Queen paused, and then said hastily, "You are very young, to have fought so well, and to speak so well. But you must not escape your penance for turning back Masters — the poor man hath caught cold on the river; for our



order reached him when he was just returned from certain visits in London, and he held it matter of loyalty and conscience instantly to set forth again. So heark ye, Master Raleigh, see thou fail not to wear thy muddy cloak, in token of penitence, till our pleasure be farther known. And here," she added, giving him a jewel of gold, in the form of a chess-man, "I give thee this to wear at the collar."

Raleigh, to whom nature had taught intuitively, as it were, those courtly arts which many scarce acquire from long experience, knelt, and, as he took from her hand the jewel, kissed the fingers which gave it. He knew, perhaps, better than almost any of the courtiers who surrounded her, how to mingle the devotion claimed by the Queen, with the gallantry due to her personal beauty — and in this, his first attempt to unite them, he succeeded so well, as at once to gratify. Elizabeth's personal vanity, and her love of power.

His master, the Earl of Sussex, had the full advantage of the satisfaction which Raleigh had afforded Elizabeth, on their first interview.

"My lords and ladies," said the Queen, looking around to the retinue by whom she was attended, "methinks, since we are upon the river, it were well to renounce our present purpose of going to the city, and surprise this poor Earl



of Sussex with a visit. He is ill, and suffering doubtless under the fear of our displeasure, from which he hath been honestly cleared by the frank avowal of this malapert boy. What think ye? were it not an act of charity to give him such consolation as the thanks of a Queen, much bound to him for his loyal service, may perchance best minister?"

It may be readily supposed, that none to whom this speech was addressed, ventured to oppose its purport.

"Your Grace," said the Bishop of Lincoln, "is the breath of our nostrils." The men of war averred, that the face of the Sovereign was a whetstone to the soldier's sword; while the men of state were not less of opinion, that the light of the Queen's countenance was a lamp to the paths of her councillors; and the ladies agreed, with one voice, that no noble in England so well deserved the regard of England's Royal Mistress as the Earl of Sussex — the Earl of Leicester's right being reserved entire; so some of the more politic worded their assent — an exception to which Elizabeth paid no apparent attention. The barge had, therefore, orders to deposit its royal freight at Deptford, at the nearest and most convenient point of communication with Say's Court, in order that the Queen might satisfy her royal and maternal solicitude,



by making personal inquiries after the health of the Earl of Sussex.

Raleigh, whose acute spirit foresaw and anticipated important consequences from the most trifling events, hastened to ask the Queen's permission to go in the skiff, and announce the royal visit to his master; ingeniously suggesting, that the joyful surprise might prove prejudicial to his health, since the richest and most generous cordials may sometimes be fatal to those who have been long in a languishing state.

But whether the Queen deemed it too presumptuous in so young a courtier to interpose his opinion unasked, or whether she was moved by a recurrence of the feeling of jealousy, which had been instilled into her, by reports that the Earl kept armed men about his person, she desired Raleigh, sharply, to reserve his counsel till it was required of him, and repeated her former orders, to be landed at Deptford, adding, "We will ourselves see what sort of household my Lord of Sussex keeps about him."

"Now the Lord have pity on us!" said the young courtier to himself. "Good hearts, the Earl hath many a one round him; but good heads are scarce with us — and he himself is too ill to give direction. And Blount will be at his morning meal of Yarmouth herrings and ale; and Tracy will have his beastly black puddings



and Rhenish; — those thorough-paced Welchmen, Thomas ap Rice and Evan Evans, will be at work on their leek porridge and toasted cheese — and she detests, they say, all coarse meats, evil smells, and strong wines. Could they but think of burning some rosemary in the great hall! but *vogue la galere*, all must now be trusted to chance. Luck hath done indifferent well for me this morning, for I trust I have spoiled a cloak, and made a court fortune — May she do as much for my gallant patron!”

The royal barge soon stopped at Deptford, and, amid the loud shouts of the populace, which her presence never failed to excite, the Queen, with a canopy borne over her head, walked, accompanied by her retinue, towards Say's Court, where the distant acclamations of the people gave the first notice of her arrival. Sussex, who was in the act of advising with Tressilian how he should make up the supposed breach in the Queen's favour, was infinitely surprised at learning her immediate approach — not that the Queen's custom of visiting her more distinguished nobility, whether in health or sickness, could be unknown to him; but the suddenness of the communication left no time for those preparations with which he well knew Elizabeth loved to be greeted, and the rudeness and confusion of his military household, much encreased



by his late illness, rendered him altogether unprepared for her reception.

Cursing internally the chance which thus brought her gracious visitation on him unaware, he hastened down with Tressilian, to whose eventful and interesting story he had just given an attentive ear.

“My worthy friend, he said, “such support as I can give your accusation of Varney, you have a right to expect, alike from justice and gratitude. Chance will presently shew whether I can do aught with our Sovereign, or whether, in very deed, my meddling in your affair may not rather prejudice than serve you.”

Thus spoke Sussex, while hastily casting around him a loose robe of sables, and adjusting his person in the best manner he could to meet the eye of his Sovereign. But no hurried attention bestowed on his apparel could remove the ghastly effects of long illness on a countenance which nature had marked with features rather strong than pleasing. Besides, he was low of stature, and though broad-shouldered, athletic, and fit for martial achievements, his presence in a peaceful hall was not such as ladies love to look upon; a personal disadvantage, which was supposed to give Sussex, though esteemed and honoured by his Sovereign, considerable disadvantage when compared with Leicester,



who was alike remarkable for elegance of manners, and for beauty of person.

The Earl's utmost dispatch only enabled him to meet the Queen as she entered the great hall, and he at once perceived there was a cloud on her brow. Her jealous eye had noticed the martial array of armed gentlemen and retainers with which the mansion-house was filled, and her first words expressed her disapprobation — "Is this a royal garrison, my Lord of Sussex? or have we by accident overshot Say's Court, and landed at our Tower of London?"

Lord Sussex hastened to offer some apology.

"It needs not," she said. "My lord, we intend speedily to take up a certain quarrel between your lordship and another great lord of our household, and at the same time to reprehend this uncivilized and dangerous practice of surrounding yourselves with armed, and even with ruffianly followers, as if, in the neighbourhood of our capital, nay in the verge of our royal residence, you were preparing to wage civil war with each other. We are glad to see you so well recovered, my lord, though without the assistance of the learned physician whom we sent to you — Urge no excuse — we know how that matter fell out, and we have corrected for it the wild slip, young Raleigh. — By the way, my lord, we will speedily relieve your house-



hold of him, and take him into our own. Something there is about him which merits to be better nurtured than he is like to be amongst your very military followers."

To this proposal Sussex, though scarce understanding how the Queen came to make it, could only bow and express his obedience. He then entreated her to remain till refreshment could be offered, but in this he could not prevail. And, after a few compliments of a much colder and more common-place character than might have been expected from a step so decidedly favourable as a personal visit, the Queen took her leave of Say's Court, having brought confusion thither along with her, and leaving doubt and apprehension behind.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

*Then call them to our presence. Face to face,  
And frowning brow to brow, ourselves will hear  
The accuser and accused freely speak; —  
High-stomach'd are they both and full of ire,  
In rage deaf as the sea, hasty as fire.*

*Richard II.*

“I AM ordered to attend court to-morrow,” said Leicester, speaking to Varney, “to meet, as they surmise, my Lord of Sussex. The Queen intends to take up matters betwixt us. This comes of her visit to Say’s Court, of which you must needs speak so lightly.”

“I maintain it was nothing,” said Varney; “nay, I know from a sure intelligencer, who was within ear-shot of much that was said, that Sussex has lost rather than gained by that visit. The Queen said, when she stepped into the boat, that Say’s Court looked like a guard-house, and smelt like an hospital. ‘Like a cook’s shop in Ram’s Alley rather,’ said the Countess of Rut-



land, who is ever your lordship's good friend. And then my Lord of Lincoln must needs put in his holy oar, and say, that my Lord of Sussex must be excused for his rude and old-world housekeeping, since he had as yet no wife."

"And what said the Queen?" said Leicester, hastily.

"She took him up roundly," said Varney, "and asked what my Lord Sussex had to do with a wife, or my Lord Bishop to speak on such a subject. If marriage is permitted, she said, I no where read that it is enjoined."

"She likes not marriages, or speech of marriage, among churchmen," said Leicester.

"Nor among courtiers neither," said Varney; but, observing that Leicester changed countenance, he instantly added, that all the ladies who were present had joined in ridiculing Lord Sussex's housekeeping, and in contrasting it with the reception her Grace would have assuredly received at my Lord of Leicester's."

"You have gathered much tidings," said Leicester, "but you have forgotten or omitted the most important of all. She hath added another to those dangling satellites, whom it is her pleasure to keep revolving around her."

"Your lordship meaneth that Raleigh, the Devonshire youth," said Varney, "the Knight of the Cloak, as they call him at the court?"



“He may be Knight of the Garter one day, for aught I know,” said Leicester, “for he advances rapidly — She hath cap’d verses with him, and such fooleries. I would gladly abandon, of my own free will, the part I have in her fickle favour, but I will not be elbowed out of it by the clown Sussex, or this new upstart. I hear Tressilian is with Sussex also, and high in his favour — I would spare him for considerations, but he will thrust himself on his fate — Sussex, too, is almost as well as ever in his health.”

“My lord,” replied Varney, “there will be rubs in the smoothest road, specially when it leads up hill. Sussex’s illness was to us a god-send, from which I hoped much. He has recovered indeed, but he is not now more formidable than ere he fell ill, when he received more than one foil in wrestling with your lordship. Let not your heart fail you, my lord, and all shall be well.”

“My heart never failed me, sir,” replied Leicester.

“No, my lord,” said Varney; “but it has betrayed you right often. He that would climb a tree, my lord, must grasp by the branches, not by the blossom.”

“Well, well, well!” said Leicester, impatiently; “I understand thy meaning — My heart shall neither fail me nor seduce me. Have my



retinue in order — see that their array be so splendid as to put down not only the rude companions of Ratcliffe, but the retainers of every other nobleman and courtier. Let them be well armed withal, but without any outward display of their weapons, wearing them as if more for fashion's sake than for use. Do thou thyself keep close to me, I may have business for you." —

The preparations of Sussex and his party were not less anxious than those of Leicester.

"Thy Supplication, impeaching Varney of seduction," said the Earl to Tressilian, "is by this time in the Queen's hand — I have sent it through a sure channel. Methinks your suit should succeed, being, as it is, founded in justice and honour, and Elizabeth being the very muster of both. But I wot not how — the gipsey (so Sussex was wont to call his rival on account of his dark complexion) hath much to say with her in these holiday times of peace — Were war at the gates, I should be one of her white boys; but soldiers, like their bucklers and bilboa blades, get out of fashion in peace time, and satin sleeves and walking rapiers bear the bell. Well, we must be gay since such is the fashion. — Blount, hast thou seen our household put into their new braveries? — But thou know'st as little of these toys as I do — thou wouldst be ready enow at disposing a stand of pikes."



“My good lord,” answered Blount, “Raleigh hath been here and taken that charge upon him — Your train will glitter like a May morning. — Marry, the cost is another question. One might keep an hospital of old soldiers at the charge of ten modern lacqueys.”

“We must not count cost to day, Nicholas,” said the Earl, in reply; “I am beholden to Raleigh for his care — I trust, though, he has remembered that I am an old soldier, and would have no more of these follies than needs must.”

“Nay, I understand nought about it; but here are your honourable lordship’s brave kinsmen and friends coming in by scores to wait upon you to court, where, methinks, we shall bear as brave a front as Leicester, let him ruffle it as he will.”

“Give them the strictest charges,” said Sussex, “that they suffer no provocation short of actual violence to provoke them into quarrel — they have hot bloods, and I would not give Leicester the advantage over me by any imprudence of theirs.”

The Earl of Sussex ran so hastily through these directions, that it was with difficulty Tressilian at length found opportunity to express his surprise that he should have proceeded so far in the affair of Sir Hugh Robsart as to lay his petition at once before the Queen — “It was the opinion



of the young lady's friends," he said, "that Leicester's sense of justice should be first appealed to as the offence had been committed by his officer, and so he had expressly told to Sussex."

"This could have been done without applying to me," said Sussex, somewhat haughtily. "I, at least, ought not to have been a counsellor when the object was a humiliating reference to Leicester; and I am surprised that you, Tressilian, a man of honour, and my friend, would assume such a mean course. If you said so, I certainly understood you not in a matter which sounded so unlike yourself."

"My lord," said Tressilian, "the course I would prefer, for my own sake, is that you have adopted; but the friends of this most unhappy lady"—

"O, the friends — the friends," said Sussex, interrupting him; "they must let us manage this cause in the way which seems best. This is the time and the hour to accumulate every charge against Leicester and his household, and your's the Queen will hold a heavy one. But at all events she hath the complaint before her."

Tressilian could not help suspecting that, in his eagerness to strengthen himself against his rival, Sussex had purposely adopted the course most likely to throw odium on Leicester, without considering minutely whether it were the mode of proceeding most like to be attended



with success. But the step was irrevocable, and Sussex escaped from farther discussing it by dismissing his company, with the command, "Let all be in order at eleven o'clock; I must be at court and in the presence by high noon precisely."

While the rival statesmen were thus anxiously preparing for their approaching meeting in the Queen's presence, even Elizabeth herself was not without apprehension of what might chance from the collision of two such fiery spirits, each backed by a strong and numerous body of followers, and dividing betwixt them, either openly or in secret, the hopes and wishes of most of her court. The band of Gentlemen Pensioners were all under arms, and a reinforcement of the yeomen of the guard was brought down the Thames from London. A royal proclamation was sent forth, strictly prohibiting nobles, of whatsoever degree, to approach the Palace with retainers or followers, armed with shot, or with long weapons; and it was even whispered, that the High Sheriff of Kent had secret instructions to have a part of the array of the county ready on the shortest notice.

The eventful hour, thus anxiously prepared for on all sides, at length approached, and, each followed by his long and glittering train of friends and followers, the rival Earls entered the Palaceyard of Greenwich at noon precisely.



As if by previous arrangement, or perhaps by intimation that such was the Queen's pleasure, Sussex and his retinue came to the Palace from Deptford by water, while Leicester arrived by land; and thus they entered the court-yard from opposite sides. This trifling circumstance gave Leicester a certain ascendancy in the opinion of the vulgar, the appearance of his cavalcade of mounted followers shewing more numerous and more imposing than those of Sussex's party, who were necessarily upon foot. No shew or sign of greeting passed between the Earls, though each looked full at the other, both expecting perhaps an exchange of courtesies, which neither was willing to commence. Almost in the minute of their arrival the castle-bell tolled, the gates of the Palace were opened, and the Earls entered, each numerously attended by such gentlemen of their train, whose rank gave them that privilege. The yeomen and inferior attendants remained in the court-yard, where the opposite parties eyed each other with looks of eager hatred and scorn, as if waiting with impatience for some cause of tumult, or some apology for mutual aggression. But they were restrained by the strict commands of their leaders, and overawed, perhaps, by the presence of an armed guard of unusual strength.

In the meanwhile, the more distinguished persons of each train followed their patrons into the



lofty halls and anti-chambers of the royal Palace, flowing on in the same current, like two streams which are compelled into the same channel, yet shun to mix their waters. The parties arranged themselves, as if it were instinctively, on the different sides of the lofty apartments, and seemed eager to escape from the transient union which the narrowness of the crowded entrance had for an instant compelled them to submit to. The folding doors at the upper end of the long gallery were immediately afterwards opened, and it was announced in a whisper that the Queen was in her presence-chamber, to which these gave access. Both Earls moved slow and stately towards the entrance; Sussex followed by Tressilian, Blount, and Raleigh, and Leicester by Varney. The pride of Leicester was obliged to give way to court-forms, and with a grave and formal inclination of the head, he paused until his rival, a peer of older creation than his own, passed before him. Sussex returned the reverence with the same formal civility, and entered the presence-room. Tressilian and Blount offered to follow him, but were not permitted, the Usher of the Black Rod alleging in excuse, that he had precise orders to look to all admissions that day. To Raleigh, who stood back on the repulse of his companions, he said, "You, sir, may enter," and he entered accordingly.



“Follow me close, Varney,” said the Earl of Leicester, who had stood aloof for a moment to mark the reception of Sussex; and, advancing to the entrance, he was about to pass on, when Varney, who was close behind him, dressed out in the utmost bravery of the day, was stopped by the usher, as Tressilian and Blount had been before him. “How is this, Master Bowyer?” said the Earl of Leicester; “Know you who I am, and that this is my friend and follower?”

“Your lordship will pardon me,” replied Bowyer, stoutly, “my orders are precise, and limit me to a strict discharge of my duty.”

“Thou art a partial knave,” said Leicester, the blood mounting to his face, “to do me this dishonour, when you but now admitted a follower of my Lord of Sussex.”

“My lord,” said Bowyer, “Master Raleigh is newly admitted a sworn servant of her Grace, and to him my orders do not apply.”

“Thou art a knave — an ungrateful knave,” said Leicester; “but he that hath done, can undo thou shalt not prank thee in thy authority long!”

This threat he uttered aloud, with less than his usual policy and discretion, and having done so, he entered the presence-chamber, and made his reverence to the Queen, who, attired with even more than her usual splendour, and surrounded by those nobles and statesmen whose



courage and wisdom have rendered her reign immortal, stood ready to receive the homage of her subjects. She graciously returned the obeisance of the favourite Earl, and looked alternately at him and at Sussex, as if about to speak, when Bowyer, a man whose spirit could not brook the insult he had so openly received from Leicester, in the discharge of his office, advanced with his black rod in his hand, and knelt down before her.

“Why, how now, Bowyer,” said Elizabeth, “thy courtesy seems strangely timed!”

“My Liege Sovereign,” he said, while every courtier around trembled at his audacity, “I come but to ask, whether, in the discharge of mine office, I am to obey your Highness’s commands, or those of the Earl of Leicester, who has publicly menaced me with his displeasure, and treated me with disparaging terms, because I denied entry to one of his followers, in obedience to your Grace’s precise orders.”

The spirit of Henry VIII. was instantly aroused in the bosom of his daughter, and she turned on Leicester with a severity which appalled him, as well as all his followers.

“God’s death, my lord,” such was her emphatic phrase, “what means this? We have thought well of you, and brought you near to our person; but it was not that you might hide the sun



from our other faithful subjects. Who gave you license to contradict our orders, or controul our officers? I will have in this court, ay, and in this realm, but one mistress, and no master. Look to it that Master Bowyer sustains no harm for his duty to me faithfully discharged; for, as I am a Christian woman and crowned Queen, I will hold you dearly answerable. — Go, Bowyer, you have done the part of an honest man and a true subject. We will brook no mayor of the palace here.”

Bowyer kissed the hand which she extended towards him, and withdrew to his post, astonished at the success of his own audacity. A smile of triumph pervaded the faction of Sussex; that of Leicester seemed proportionally dismayed, and the favourite himself, assuming an aspect of deepest humility, did not even attempt a word in his own exculpation.

He acted wisely; for it was the policy of Elizabeth to humble, not to disgrace him, and it was prudent to suffer her, without opposition or reply, to glory in the exertion of her authority. The dignity of the queen was gratified, and the woman began soon to feel for the mortification which she had imposed on her favourite. Her keen eye also observed the secret looks of congratulation exchanged amongst those who favoured Sussex, and it was no part of her policy to give either party a decisive triumph.



“What I say to my Lord of Leicester,” she said, after a moment’s pause, “I say also to you, my Lord of Sussex. You also must needs ruffle in the Court of England, at the head of a faction of your own?”

“My followers, gracious Princess,” said Sussex, “have indeed ruffled in your cause, in Ireland, in Scotland, and against yonder rebellious Earls in the north. I am ignorant that” —

“Do you bandy looks and words with me, my lord?” said the Queen, interrupting him; “methinks you might learn of my Lord of Leicester the modesty to be silent, at least, under our censure. I say, my lord, that my grandfather and my father, in their wisdom, debarred the nobles of this civilized land from travelling with such disorderly retinues; and think you, that because I wear a coif, their sceptre has in my hand been changed into a distaff? I tell you, no king in Christendom will less brook his court to be cumbered, his people oppressed, and his kingdom’s peace disturbed by the arrogance of overgrown power, than she who now speaks with you. — My Lord of Leicester, and you, my Lord of Sussex, I command you both to be friends with each other; or by the crown I wear, you shall find an enemy who will be too strong for both of you.”

“Madam,” said the Earl of Leicester, “you



who are yourself the fountain of honour, know best what is due to mine. I place it at your disposal, and only say, that the terms on which I have stood with my Lord of Sussex have not been of my seeking; nor had he cause to think me his enemy, until he had done me gross wrong."

"For me, Madam," said the Earl of Sussex, "I cannot appeal from your sovereign pleasure; but I were well content my Lord of Leicester should say in what I have, as he terms it, wronged him, since my tongue never spoke the word that I would not willingly justify either on foot or horseback."

"And for me," said Leicester, "always under my gracious Sovereign's pleasure, my hand shall be as ready to make good my words, as that of any man who ever wrote himself Ratcliffe."

"My lords," said the Queen, "these are no terms for this presence; and if you cannot keep your temper, we will find means to keep both that and you close enough. Let me see you join hands, my lords, and forget your idle animosities."

The two rivals looked at each other with reluctant eyes, each unwilling to make the first advance to execute the Queen's will.

"Sussex," said Elizabeth, "I entreat — Leicester, I command you."

Yet, so were her words accented, that the



entreaty sounded like command, and the command like entreaty. They remained still and stubborn, until she raised her voice to a height which argued at once impatience and absolute command.

“Sir Henry Lee,” she said, to an officer in attendance, “have a guard in present readiness, and man a barge instantly. — My Lords of Sussex and Leicester, I bid you once more to join hands — and, God’s death! he that refuses shall taste of our Tower fare ere he see our face again. I will lower your proud hearts ere we part, and that I promise, on the word of a Queen.”

“The prison,” said Leicester, “might be borne, but to lose your Grace’s presence, were to lose light and life at once. — Here, Sussex, is my hand.”

“And here,” said Sussex, “is mine, in truth and honesty; but” —

“Nay, under favour, you shall add no more,” said the Queen. “Why, this is as it should be,” she added, looking on them more favourably, “and when you, the shepherds of the people, unite to protect them, it shall be well with the flock we rule over. For, my lords, I tell you plainly, your follies and your brawls lead to strange disorders among your servants. — My Lord of Leicester, you have a gentleman in your household, called Varney?”



“Yes, gracious Madam,” replied Leicester, “I presented him to kiss your royal hand when you were last at Nonsuch.”

“His outside was well enough,” said the Queen, “but scarce so fair, I should have thought, as to have caused a maiden of honourable birth and hopes to barter her fame for his good looks, and become his paramour. Yet so it is — this fellow of yours hath seduced the daughter of a good old Devonshire knight, Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote-hall, and she hath fled with him from her father’s house like a cast-away. — My Lord of Leicester, are you ill, that you look so deadly pale?”

“No, gracious Madam,” said Leicester; and it required every effort he could make to bring forth these few words.

“You are surely ill, my lord?” said Elizabeth, going towards him with hasty speech and hurried step, which indicated the deepest concern. “Call Masters — call our surgeon in ordinary — Where be these loitering fools? — We lose the pride of our court through their negligence. — Or is it possible, Leicester,” she continued, looking on him with a very gentle aspect, “can fear of my displeasure have wrought so deeply on thee? Doubt not for a moment, noble Dudley, that we could blame *thee* for the folly of thy retainer — thee, whose thoughts we know to be far otherwise employed? He that would climb the eagle’s



nest, my lord, cares not who are catching linnets at the foot of the precipice."

"Mark you that?" said Sussex, aside to Raleigh. "The devil aids him surely! for all that would sink another ten fathom deep, seems but to make him float the more easily. Had a follower of mine acted thus" —

"Peace, my good lord," said Raleigh, "for God's sake, peace. Wait the change of the tide; it is even now on the turn."

The acute observation of Raleigh, perhaps, did not deceive him; for Leicester's confusion was so great, and, indeed, for the moment, so irresistibly overwhelming, that Elizabeth, after looking at him with a wondering eye, and receiving no intelligible answer to the unusual expressions of grace and affection which had escaped from her, shot her quick glance around the circle of courtiers, and reading, perhaps, in their faces, something that accorded with her own awakened suspicions, she said suddenly, "Or is there more in this than we see — or than you, my lord, wish that we should see? Where is this Varney? Who saw him?"

"An it please your Grace," said Bowyer, "it is the same against whom I this instant closed the door of the presence-room."

"An it please me?" repeated Elizabeth sharply, not at that moment in the humour of being



pleased with any thing, "It does *not* please me that he should pass saucily into my presence, or that you should exclude from it one who came to justify himself from an accusation."

"May it please you," answered the perplexed usher, "if I knew, in such case, how to bear myself, I would take heed" —

"You should have reported the fellow's desire to us, Master Usher, and taken our directions. You think yourself a great man, because but now we chid a nobleman on your account — but, after all, we hold you but as the lead-weight that keeps the door fast. Call this Varney hither instantly — there is one Tressilian also mentioned in this petition — let them both come before us."

She was obeyed, and Tressilian and Varney appeared accordingly. Varney's first glance was at Leicester, his second at the Queen. In the looks of the latter, there appeared an approaching storm, and in the downcast countenance of his patron, he could read no directions in what way he was to trim his vessel for the encounter — he then saw Tressilian, and at once perceived the peril of the situation in which he was placed. But Varney was as bold-faced and ready-witted as he was cunning and unscrupulous, — a skilful pilot in extremity, and fully conscious of the advantages which he would obtain, could he extricate Leicester from his present peril, and of



the ruin that yawned for himself, should he fail in doing so.

“Is it true, sirrah,” said the Queen, with one of those searching looks which few had the audacity to resist, “that you have seduced to infamy a young lady of birth and breeding, the daughter of Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote-Hall?”

Varney kneeled down, and replied, with a look of the most profound contrition, “There had been some love passages betwixt him and Mistress Amy Robsart.”

Leicester’s flesh quivered with indignation as he heard his dependant make this avowal, and for one moment he manned himself to step forward, and, bidding farewell to the court and the royal favour, confess the whole mystery of the secret marriage. But he looked at Sussex, and the idea of the triumphant smile which would clothe his cheek upon hearing the avowal, sealed his lips. “Not now, at least,” he thought, “or in this presence, will I afford him so rich a triumph.” And pressing his lips close together, he stood firm and collected, attentive to each word which Varney uttered, and determined to hide to the last the secret on which his court-favour seemed to depend. Meanwhile, the Queen proceeded in her examination of Varney.

“Love passages!” said she, echoing his last words; “what passages, thou knave? and why



not ask the wench's hand from her father, if thou hadst any honesty in thy love for her?"

"An it please your Grace," said Varney, still on his knees, "I dared not do so, for her father had promised her hand to a gentleman of birth and honour -- I will do him justice, though I know he bears me ill will -- one Master Edmund Tressilian, whom I now see in the presence."

"Soh!" replied the Queen; "and what was your right to make the simple fool break her worthy father's contract, through your love *passages*, as your conceit and assurance terms them?"

"Madam," replied Varney, "it is in vain to plead the cause of human frailty before a judge to whom it is unknown, or that of love, to one who never yields to the passion." — He paused an instant, and then added, in a very low and timid tone, "which she inflicts upon all others."

Elizabeth tried to frown, but smiled in her own despite, as she answered, "Thou art a marvellously impudent knave — Art thou married to the girl?"

Leicester's feelings became so complicated and so painfully intense, that it seemed to him as if his life was to depend on the answer made by Varney, who, after a moment's real hesitation, answered, "Yes."

"Thou false villain!" said Leicester, bursting forth into rage, yet unable to add another word



to the sentence, which he had begun with such emphatic passion.

“Nay, my lord,” said the Queen, “we will, by your leave, stand between this fellow and your anger. We have not yet done with him.— Knew your master, my Lord of Leicester, of this fair work of yours? Speak truth, I command thee, and I will be thy warrant from danger on every quarter.”

“Gracious Madam,” said Varney, “to speak heaven’s truth, my lord was the cause of the whole matter.”

“Thou villain, would’st thou betray me?” said Leicester.

“Speak on,” said the Queen hastily, her cheek colouring, and her eyes sparkling, as she addressed Varney; “speak on — here no commands are heard but mine.”

“They are omnipotent, gracious Madam,” replied Varney; “and to you there can be no secrets. — Yet I would not,” he added, looking around him, “speak of my master’s concerns to other ears.”

“Fall back, my lords,” said the Queen to those who surrounded her, “and do you speak on. — What hath the Earl to do with this guilty intrigue of thine? — See, fellow, that thou beliest him not.”

“Far be it from me to traduce my noble pa-



tron," replied Varney; "yet I am compelled to own that some deep, overwhelming, yet secret feeling, hath of late dwelt in my lord's mind, hath abstracted him from the cares of the household, which he was wont to govern with such religious strictness, and hath left us opportunities to do follies, of which the same, as in this case, partly falls upon our patron. Without this, I had not had means or leisure to commit the folly which has drawn on me his displeasure; the heaviest to endure by me, which I could by any means incur, — saving always the yet more dreaded resentment of your Grace."

"And in this sense, and no other, hath he been accessory to thy fault?" said Elizabeth.

"Surely, Madam, in no other," replied Varney; "but since somewhat hath chanced to him, he can scarce be called his own man. Look at him, Madam, how pale and trembling he stands — how unlike his usual majesty of manner — yet what has he to fear from aught I can say to your Highness? Ah! Madam, since he received that fatal packet!"

"What packet, and from whence?" said the Queen, eagerly.

"From whence, madam, I cannot guess; but I am so near to his person, that I know he has ever since worn, suspended around his neck, and next to his heart, that lock of hair which sustains



a small golden jewel shaped like a heart — he speaks to it when alone — he parts not from it when he sleeps — no heathen ever worshipped an idol with such devotion.”

“Thou art a prying knave to watch thy master so closely,” said Elizabeth, blushing, but not with anger; “and a tattling knave to tell over again his fooleries. — What colour might the braid of hair be that thou pratest of?”

Varney replied, “A poet Madam, might call it a thread from the golden web wrought by Minerva; but, to my thinking, it was paler than even the purest gold — more like the last parting sunbeam of the softest day of spring.”

“Why, you are a poet yourself, Master Varney,” said the Queen, smiling; “but I have not genius quick enough to follow your rare metaphors — Look round these ladies — is there — (she hesitated, and endeavoured to assume an air of great indifference) — Is there here, in this presence, any lady, the colour of whose hair reminds thee of that braid? Methinks, without prying into my Lord of Leicester’s amorous secrets, I would fain know what kind of locks are like the thread of Minerva’s web, or the — what was it? — the last rays of the May-day sun.”

Varney looked round the presence-chamber, his eye travelling from one lady to another, until at length it rested upon the Queen herself,



but with an aspect of the deepest veneration. «I see no tresses,” he said, «in this presence worthy of such similies, unless where I dare not look on them.”

«How, sir knave,” said the Queen, «dare you intimate” —

«Nay, Madam,” replied Varney, shading his eyes with his hand, «it was the beams of the May-day sun that dazzled my weak eyes.”

«Go to — go to,” said the Queen; «thou art a foolish fellow” — and turning quickly from him she walked up to Leicester.

Intense curiosity, mingled with all the various hopes, fears, and passions, which influence court-faction, had occupied the presence-chamber during the Queen’s conference with Varney, as if with the strength of an eastern talisman. Men suspended every, even the slightest external motion, and would have ceased to breathe, had Nature permitted such an intermission of her functions. The atmosphere was contagious, and Leicester, who saw all around wishing or fearing his advancement or his fall, forgot all that love had previously dictated, and saw nothing for the instant but the favour or disgrace which depended on the nod of Elizabeth and the fidelity of Varney. He summoned himself hastily, and prepared to play his part in the scene which was like to ensue, when, as he judged from the



glances which the Queen threw towards him, Varney's communications, be they what they might, were operating in his favour. Elizabeth did not long leave him in doubt; for the more than favour with which she accosted him decided his triumph in the eyes of his rival, and of the assembled court of England — "Thou hast a prating servant of this same Varney, my lord," she said; "it is lucky you trust him with nothing that can hurt you in our opinion, for believe me, he would keep no counsel."

"From your Highness," said Leicester, dropping gracefully on one knee, "it were treason he should. I would that my heart itself lay before you, barer than the tongue of any servant could strip it."

"What, my lord," said Elizabeth, looking kindly upon him, "is there no one little corner over which you would wish to spread a veil? Ah! I see you are confused at the question, and your Queen knows she should not look too deeply into her servants' motives for their faithful duty, lest she see what might, or at least ought to displease her."

Relieved by these last words, Leicester broke out into a torrent of expressions of deep and passionate attachment, which perhaps, at that moment, were not altogether fictitious. The mingled emotions which had at first overcome



him, had now given way to the energetic vigour with which he had determined to support his place in the Queen's favour; and never did he seem to Elizabeth more eloquent, more handsome, more interesting, than while, kneeling at her feet, he conjured her to strip him of all his power, but to leave him the name of her servant — "Take from the poor Dudley," he exclaimed, "all that your bounty has made him, and bid him be the poor gentleman he was when your grace first shone on him; leave him no more than his cloak and his sword, but let him still boast he has — what in word or deed he never forfeited — the regard of his adored Queen and mistress!"

"No, Dudley!" said Elizabeth, raising him with one hand, while she extended the other that he might kiss it; "Elizabeth hath not forgotten that, whilst you were a poor gentleman, despoiled of your hereditary rank, she was as poor a princess, and that in her cause you then ventured all that oppression had left you — your life and honour. — Rise, my lord, and let my hand go! — Rise, and be what you have ever been, the grace of our court, and the support of our throne. Your mistress may be forced to chide your misdemeanours, but never without owning your merits. — And so help me God," she added, turning to the audience, who, with various feelings, witnessed this interesting scene,



— “So help me God, gentlemen, as I think never sovereign had a truer servant than I have in this noble Earl.”

A murmur of assent rose from the Leicestrian faction, which the friends of Sussex dared not oppose. They remained with their eyes fixed on the ground, dismayed as well as mortified by the public and absolute triumph of their opponents. Leicester's first use of the familiarity to which the Queen had so publicly restored him, was to ask her commands concerning Varney's offence. “Although,” he said, “the fellow deserves nothing from me but displeasure, yet, might I presume to intercede” —

“In truth, we had forgotten his matter,” said the Queen; “and it was ill done of us, who owe justice to our meanest, as well as to our highest subject. We are pleased, my lord, that you were the first to recall the matter to our memory, — Where is Tressilian, the accuser? — let him come before us.”

Tressilian appeared, and made a low and be-seeming reverence. His person, as we have elsewhere observed, had an air of grace and even of nobleness, which did not escape Queen Elizabeth's critical observation. She looked at him with attention as he stood before her unabashed, but with an air of the deepest dejection.

“I cannot but grieve for this gentleman,” she



said to Leicester. «I have inquired concerning him, and his presence confirms what I heard, that he is a scholar and a soldier, well accomplished both in arts and arms. We women, my lord, are fanciful in our choice — I had said now, to judge by the eye, there was no comparison to be held betwixt your follower and this gentleman. But Varney is a well spoken fellow, and to speak truth, that goes far with us of the weaker sex. — Look you, Master Tressilian, a bolt lost is not a bow broken. Your true affection, as I will hold it to be, hath been, it seems, but ill requited; but you have scholarship, and you know there have been false Cressidas to be found, from the Trojan war downwards. Forget, good sir, this Lady Light a' Love — teach your affection to see with a wiser eye. This we say to you, more from the writings of learned men, than our own knowledge, being, as we are, far removed by station and will, from the enlargement of experience in such idle toys of humorous passion. For this dame's father, we can make his grief the less, by advancing his son-in-law to such station as may enable him to give an honourable support to his bride. Thou shalt not be forgotten thyself, Tressilian — follow our court, and thou shalt see that a true Troilus hath some claim on our grace. Think of what that arch-knave Shakespeare says — a plague on him, his



toys come into my head when I should think of other matter — Stay, how goes it? —

Cressid was your's, tied with the bonds of  
heaven;

These bonds of heaven are slipt, dissolved, and  
loosed,

And with another knot five fingers tied,

The fragments of her faith are bound to Diomed.

You smile, my Lord of Southampton — perchance I make your player's verse halt through my bad memory — but let it suffice — let there be no more of this mad matter."

And as Tressilian kept the posture of one who would willingly be heard, though, at the same time, expressive of the deepest reverence, the Queen added with some impatience, — "What would the man have? The wench cannot wed both of you? — She has made her election — not a wise one perchance — but she is Varney's wedded wife."

"My suit should sleep there, most gracious Sovereign," said Tressilian, "and with my suit my revenge. But I hold this Varney's word no good warrant for the truth."

"Had that doubt been elsewhere urged," answered Varney, "my sword" —

"*Thy* sword!" interrupted Tressilian, scornfully; "with her Grace's leave, my sword shall shew" —



“Peace, you knaves both,” said the Queen; “know you where you are? — This comes of your feuds, my lords,” she added, looking towards Leicester and Sussex; “your followers catch your own humour, and must bandy and brawl in my court, and in my very presence, like so many Matamoros. — Look you, sirs, he that speaks of drawing swords in any other quarrel than mine or England’s, by mine honour, I’ll bracelet him with iron both on wrist and ancle!” She then paused a minute, and resumed in a milder tone, “I must do justice betwixt the bold and mutinous knaves notwithstanding. — My Lord of Leicester, will you warrant with your honour, — that is, to the best of your belief, — that your servant speaks truth in saying he hath married this Amy Robsart?”

This was a home-thrust, and had nearly staggered Leicester. But he had now gone too far to recede, and answered, after a moment’s hesitation, “To the best of my belief — indeed on my certain knowledge — she is a wedded wife.”

“Gracious Madam,” said Tressilian, “may I yet request to know, when and under what circumstances this alleged marriage” —

“Out, sirrah,” answered the Queen; “*alleged* marriage! — Have you not the word of this illustrious Earl to warrant the truth of what his servant says? But thou art a loser — think’st



thyself such at least — and thou shalt have indulgence — we will look into the matter ourself more at leisure. — My Lord of Leicester, I trust you remember we mean to taste the good cheer of your Castle of Kenilworth on this week ensuing — we will pray you to bid our good and valued friend the Earl of Sussex to hold company with us there.”

“If the noble Earl of Sussex,” said Leicester, bowing to his rival with the easiest and with the most graceful courtesy, “will so far honour my poor house, I will hold it an additional proof of the amicable regard it is your Grace’s desire we should entertain towards each other.”

Sussex was more embarrassed — “I should,” said he, “Madam, be but a clog on your gayer hours since my late severe illness.”

“And have you been indeed so very ill?” said Elizabeth, looking on him with more attention than before; “you are in faith strangely altered, and deeply am I grieved to see it. But be of good cheer — we will ourselves look after the health of so valued a servant, and to whom we owe so much. Masters shall order your diet; and that we ourselves may see that he is obeyed, you must attend us in this progress to Kenilworth.”

This was said so peremptorily and at the same time with so much kindness, that Sussex, however unwilling to become the guest of his rival



had no resource but to bow low to the Queen in obedience to her commands, and to express to Leicester, with blunt courtesy, though mingled with embarrassment, his acceptance of his invitation. As the Earls exchanged compliments on the occasion, the Queen said to her High Treasurer, "Methinks, my lord, the countenances of these our two noble peers resemble that of the two famed classic streams, the one so dark and sad, the other so fair and noble — My old Master Ascham would have chid me for forgetting the author — It is Cæsar, as I think. — See what majestic calmness sits on the brow of the noble Leicester, while Sussex seems to greet him as if he did our will indeed, but not willingly."

The doubt of your Majesty's favour," answered the Lord Treasurer, "may perchance occasion the difference, which does not — as what does? — escape your Grace's eye."

"Such doubt were injurious to us, my lord," replied the Queen. "We hold both to be near and dear to us, and will with impartiality employ both in honourable service for the weal of our kingdom. But we will break their farther conference at present. — My Lords of Sussex and Leicester, we have a word more with you. Tresilian and Varney are near your persons — you will see that they attend you at Kenilworth — And as we will then have both Paris and Mene-



laus within our call, so we will have this same fair Helen also, whose fickleness has caused this broil. — Varney, thy wife must be at Kenilworth, and forthcoming at my order. — My Lord of Leicester, we expect you will look to this.”

The Earl and his follower bowed low, and raised their heads, without daring to look at the Queen, or at each other; for both felt at the instant as if the nets and toils which their own falsehood had woven, were in the act of closing around them. The Queen, however, observed not their confusion, but proceeded to say, “My Lords of Sussex and Leicester, we require your presence at the privy-council to be presently held, where matters of importance are to be debated. We will then take the water for our divertisement, and you, my lords, will attend us. — And that reminds us of a circumstance — Do you, Sir Squire of the Soiled Cassock, (distinguishing Raleigh by a smile) fail not to observe that you are to attend us on our progress. You shall be supplied with suitable means to reform your wardrobe.”

And so terminated this celebrated audience, in which, as throughout her life, Elizabeth united the occasional caprice of her sex, with that sense and sound policy, in which neither man nor woman ever excelled her.

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 CHAPTER XVII.

*Well, then — our course is chosen — spread  
the sail —*

*Heave oft the lead, and mark the soundings  
well —*

*Look to the helm, good master — many a  
shoal*

*Marks this stern coast, and rocks, where sits  
the Syren,*

*Who, like ambition, lures men to their ruin.*

*The Shipwreck.*

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DURING the brief interval that intervened betwixt the dismissal of the audience and the sitting of the privy council, Leicester had time to reflect that he had that morning sealed his own fate. "It was impossible for him now," he thought, "after having, in the face of all that was honourable in England, pledged his truth



(though in ambiguous phrase) for the statement of Varney, to contradict or disavow it, without exposing himself, not merely to the loss of court-favour, but to the highest displeasure of the Queen, his deceived mistress, and to the scorn and contempt at once of his rival and of all his compeers." This certainty rushed at once on his mind, together with all the difficulties which he would necessarily be exposed to in preserving a secret, which seemed now equally essential to his safety, to his power, and to his honour. He was situated like one who walks upon ice, ready to give way around him, and whose only safety consists in moving onwards, by firm and unvacillating steps. The Queen's favour, to preserve which he had made such sacrifice, must now be secured by all means and at all hazards — it was the only plank which he could cling to in the tempest. He must settle himself, therefore, to the task of not only preserving, but augmenting the Queen's partiality — He must be the favourite of Elizabeth, or a man utterly shipwrecked in fortune and in honour. All other considerations must be laid aside for the moment, and he repelled the intrusive thoughts which forced on his mind the image of Amy, by saying to himself, there would be time to think hereafter how he was to escape from the labyrinth ultimately, since the



pilot, who sees a Scylla under his bows, must not for the time think of the more distant dangers of Charybdis.

In this mood, the Earl of Leicester that day assumed his chair at the council table of Elizabeth; and when the hours of business were over, in this same mood did he occupy an honoured place near to her, during her pleasure excursion on the Thames. And never did he display to more advantage his powers as a politician of the first rank, or his parts as an accomplished courtier.

It chanced that in that day's council matters were agitated touching the affairs of the unfortunate Mary, the seventh year of whose captivity in England was now in doleful currency. There had been opinions in favour of this unhappy princess laid before Elizabeth's council, and supported with much strength of argument by Sussex and others, who dwelt more upon the law of nations and the breach of hospitality, than, however softened or qualified, was agreeable to the Queen's ear. Leicester adopted the contrary opinion with great animation and eloquence, and described the necessity of continuing the severe restraint of the Queen of Scots, as a measure essential to the safety of the kingdom, and particularly of Elizabeth's sacred person, the lightest hair of whose head, he maintained,



ought, in their lordships' estimation, to be matter of more deep and anxious concern, than the life and fortunes of a rival, who, after setting up a vain and unjust pretence to the throne of England, was now, even while in the bosom of her country, the constant hope and theme of all the enemies to Elizabeth, whether at home or abroad. He ended by craving pardon of their lordships, if in the zeal of speech he had given any offence; but the Queen's safety was a theme which hurried him beyond his usual moderation of debate.

Elizabeth chid him, but not severely, for the weight which he attached unduly to her personal interests; yet she owned, that since it had been the pleasure of heaven to combine those interests with the weal of her subjects, she did only her duty when she adopted such measures of self-preservation as circumstances forced upon her; and if the council in their wisdom should be of opinion, that it was needful to continue some restraint on the person of her unhappy sister of Scotland, she trusted they would not blame her if she requested of the Countess of Shrewsbury to use her with as much kindness as might be consistent with her safe keeping. And with this intimation of her pleasure, the council was dismissed.

Never was more anxious and ready way made



for "my Lord of Leicester," than as he passed through the crowded anti-rooms to go towards the river-side, in order to attend her Majesty to her barge — Never was the voice of the ushers louder, to "make room — make room for the noble Earl" — Never were these signals more promptly and reverentially obeyed — Never were more anxious eyes turned on him to obtain a glance of favour, or even of mere recognition, while the heart of many a humble follower throbbed betwixt desire to offer his congratulations, and fear of intruding himself on the notice of one so infinitely above him. The whole court considered the issue of this day's audience, expected with so much doubt and anxiety, as a decisive triumph on the part of Leicester, and felt assured that the orb of his rival satellite, if not altogether obscured by his lustre, must revolve hereafter in a dimmer and more distant sphere. So thought the court and courtiers, from high to low; and they acted accordingly.

On the other hand, never did Leicester return the general greeting with such ready and condescending courtesy, or endeavour more successfully to gather (in the words of one, who at that moment stood at no great distance from him) "golden opinions from all sorts of men."

For all the favourite Earl had a bow, a smile at least, and often a kind word. Most of these



were addressed to courtiers, whose names have long gone down the tide of oblivion; but some, to such as sound strangely in our ears, when connected with the ordinary matters of human life, above which the gratitude of posterity has long elevated them. A few of Leicester's interlocutory sentences ran as follows:

“Poynings, good morrow, and how does your wife and fair daughter? Why come they not to court? — Adams, your suit is naught — the Queen will grant no more monopolies — but I may serve you in another matter. — My good Alderman Aylford, the suit of the City, affecting Queen-hithe, shall be forwarded as far as my poor interest can serve. — Master Edmund Spencer, touching your irish petition, I would willingly aid you, from my love to the Muses; but thou hast nettled the Lord Treasurer.”

“My lord,” said the poet, “were I permitted to explain” —

“Come to my lodging, Edmund,” answered the Earl — “not to-morrow, or next day, but soon. — Ha, Will Shakespeare — wild Will! — thou hast given my nephew, Philip Sidney, love-powder — he cannot sleep without thy Venus and Adonis under his pillow! We will have thee hanged for the veriest wizard in Europe. Heark thee, mad wag, I have not forgotten thy matter of the patent, and of the bears.”



The *player* bowed, and the Earl nodded and passed on — so that age would have told the tale — in ours, perhaps, we might say the immortal had done homage to the mortal. The next whom the favourite accosted, was one of his own zealous dependants.

“How now, Sir Francis Denning,” he whispered, in answer to his exulting salutation, “that smile hath made thy face shorter by one-third than when I first saw it this morning. — What, Master Bowyer, stand you back, and think you I bear malice? You did but your duty this morning; and, if I remember aught of the passage betwixt us, it shall be in thy favour.”

Then the Earl was approached, with several fantastic congees, by a person quaintly dressed in a doubled of black velvet, curiously slashed and pinked with crimson satin. A long cock’s feather in the velvet bonnet, which he held in his hand, and an enormous ruff, stiffened to the extremity of the absurd taste of the times, joined with a sharp, lively, conceited expression of countenance, seemed to body forth a vain, hair-brained coxcomb, and small Wit; while the rod he held, and an assumption of formal authority, appeared to express some sense of official consequence, which qualified the natural pertness of his manner. A perpetual blush,



which occupied rather the sharp nose than the thin cheek of this personage, seemed to speak more of "good life," as it was called, than of modesty; and the manner in which he approached to the Earl, confirmed that suspicion.

"Good even to you, Master Robert Laneham," said Leicester, and seemed desirous to pass forward, without farther speech.

"I have a suit to your noble lordship," said the figure, boldly following him.

"And what is it, good master keeper of the council-chamber door?"

"*Clerk* of the council-chamber door," said Master Robert Laneham, with emphasis, by way of reply and of correction.

"Well, qualify thine office as thou wilt, man," replied the Earl; "what would'st thou have with me?"

"Simply," answered Laneham, "that your lordship would be, as here to fore, my good lord, and procure me licence to attend the Summer Progress unto your lordship's most beautiful, and all-to-be unmatched Castle of Kenilworth."

"To what purpose, good Master Laneham," replied the Earl; "bethink you my guests must needs be many."

"Not so many," replied the petitioner, "but that your nobleness will willingly spare your old



servitor his crib and his mess. Bethink you, my lord, how necessary is this rod of mine, to fright away all those listeners, who else would play at bo-peep with the honourable council, and be searching for key-holes and crannies in the door of the chamber, so as to render my staff as needful as a fly-flap in a butcher's shop."

"Methinks you have found out a fly-blown comparison for the honourable council, Master Laneham," said the Earl; "but seek not about to justify it. Come to Kenilworth, if you list; there will be store of fools there beside, and so you will be fitted."

"Nay, an there be fools, my lord," replied Laneham, with much glee, "I warrant I will make sport among them; for no grey-hound loves to cote a hare, as I to turn and course a fool. But I have another singular favour to beseech of your honour."

"Speak it, and let me go" said the Earl; "I think the Queen comes forth instantly."

"My lord, I would fain bring a bed-fellow with me."

"How, you irreverent rascal!" said Leicester.

"Nay, my lord, my meaning is within the canons," answered his unblushing, or rather his everblushing petitioner. "I have a wife as curious as her grandmother, who eat the apple. Now, take her with me I may not, her High-



ness's orders being so strict against the officers bringing with them their wives in a progress, and so lumbering the court with womankind. But what I would crave of your lordship, is, to find room for her in some mummary, or pretty pageant, in disguise, as it were; so that, not being known for my wife, there may be no offence."

"The foul fiend seize ye both!" said Leicester, stung into uncontrollable passion by the recollections which this speech excited — "Whystop you me with such follies?"

The terrified clerk of the chamber-door, astonished at the burst of resentment he had so unconsciously produced, dropped his staff of office from his hand, and gazed on the incensed Earl with a foolish face of wonder and terror, which instantly recalled Leicester to himself.

"I meant but to try if thou hadst the audacity which befits thine office," said he hastily. "Come to Kenilworth, and bring the devil with thee, if thou wilt."

"My wife, sir, hath played the devil ere now, in a Mystery, in Queen Mary's time — but we shall want a trifle for properties."

"Here is a crown for thee," said the Earl, — "make me rid of thee — the great bell rings."

Master Robert Laneham stared a moment at the agitation which he had excited, and then



said to himself, as he stooped to pick up his staff of office, "The noble Earl runs wild humours to-day; but they who give crowns, expect us witty fellows to wink at their unsettled starts; and, by my faith, if they paid not for mercy, we would finger them tightly."

Leicester moved hastily on, neglecting the courtesies he had hitherto dispersed so liberally, and hurrying through the courtly crowd, until he paused in a small withdrawing room, into which he plunged to draw a moment's breath unobserved, and in seclusion.

"What am I now," he said to himself, "that am thus jaded by the words of a mean, weatherbeaten, goose-brained gull! — Conscience, thou art a blood-hound, whose growl wakes as readily at the paltry stir of a rat or mouse, as at the step of a lion. — Can I not quit myself by one bold stroke of a state so irksome, so unhonoured? What if I kneel to Elizabeth, and, owning the whole, throw myself on her mercy?" —

As he pursued this train of thought, the door of the apartment opened, and Varney rushed in.

"Thank God, mylord, that I have found you," was his exclamation.

"Thank the devil, whose agent thou art," was the Earl's reply.

"Thank whom you will, my lord," replied



Varney; "but hasten to the water-side. The Queen is on board, and asks for you."

"Go, say I am taken suddenly ill," replied Leicester; "for, by heaven, my brain can sustain this no longer."

"I may well say so," said Varney, with bitterness of expression; "for your place, ay, and mine, who, as your master of the horse was to have attended your lordship, is already filled up in the Queen's barge. The new minion, Walter Raleigh, and our old acquaintance, Tressilian, were called for to fill our places just as I hastened away to seek you."

"Thou art a devil, Varney," said Leicester hastily; "but thou hast the mastery for the present — I follow thee."

Varney replied not, but led the way out of the palace, and towards the river, while his master followed him, as if mechanically; until, looking back, he said in a tone which savoured of familiarity at least, if not of authority, "How is this, my lord? — your cloak hangs on one side, — your hose are unbraced — permit me" —

"Thou art a fool, Varney, as well as a knave," said Leicester, shaking him off and rejecting his officious assistance; "we are best thus, sir — when we require you to order our person, it is well, but now we want you not."



«So saying, the Earl resumed at once his air of command, and with it his self-possession — shook his dress into yet wilder disorder — passed before Varney with the air of a superior and master, and in his turn led the way to the riverside.

The Queen's barge was on the very point of putting off; the seat allotted to Leicester in the stern, and that to his master of the horse on the bow of the boat, being already filled up. But on Leicester's approach, there was a pause, as if the bargemen anticipated some alteration in their company. The angry spot was, however, in the Queen's cheek, as, in that cold tone with which superiors endeavour to veil their internal agitation, while speaking to those before whom it would be derogation to express it, she pronounced the chilling words — «We have waited, my Lord of Leicester.»

«Madam, and most gracious Princess,” said Leicester, «you, who can pardon so many weaknesses which your own heart never knows, can best bestow your commiseration on the agitations of the bosom, which, for a moment, affect both head and limbs. — I came to your presence, a doubting and an accused subject; your goodness penetrated the clouds of defamation, and restored me to my own honour, and, what is yet dearer, to your favour — is it wonderful,



though for me it is most unhappy, that my master of the horse should have found me in a state which scarce permitted me to make the exertion necessary to follow him to this place, when one glance of your Highness, although, alas! an angry one, has had power to do that for me, in which Esculapius might have failed?"

"How is this?" said Elizabeth hastily, looking at Varney; "hath your lord been ill?"

"Something of a fainting fit," answered the ready-witted Varney, "as your Grace may observe from his present condition. My lord's haste would not permit me leisure even to bring his dress into order."

"It matters not," said Elizabeth, as she gazed on the noble face and form of Leicester, to which even the strange mixture of passions by which he had been so lately agitated, gave additional interest, "make room for my noble lord — Your place, Master Varney, has been filled up; you must find a seat in another barge."

Varney bowed, and withdrew.

"And you too, our young Squire of the Cloak," added she, looking at Raleigh, "must, for the time, go to the barge of our ladies of honour. As for Tressilian, he hath already suffered too much by the caprice of women, that I should aggrieve him by my change of plan, so far as he is concerned."



Leicester seated himself in his place in the barge, and close to the Sovereign; Raleigh rose to retire, and Tressilian would have been so ill-timed in his courtesy as to offer to relinquish his own place to his friend, had not the acute glance of Raleigh himself, who seemed now in his native element, made him sensible, that so ready a disclamation of the royal favour might be misinterpreted. He sate silent, therefore, whilst Raleigh, with a profound bow, and a look of the deepest humiliation, was about to quit his place.

A young courtier, the gallant Lord Willoughby, read, as he thought, something in the Queen's face, which seemed to pity Raleigh's real or assumed semblance of mortification.

"It is not for us old courtiers," he said, "to hide the sunshine from the young ones. I will, with her Majesty's leave, relinquish for an hour, that which her subjects hold dearest, the delight of her Highness's presence, and mortify myself by walking in star-light, while I forsake for a brief season, the glory of Diana's own beams. I will take place in the boat which the ladies occupy, and permit this young cavalier his hour of promised felicity."

The Queen replied with an expression betwixt mirth and earnest, "If you are so willing to leave us, my lord, we cannot help the mortifi-



fication. But, under favour, we do not trust you — old and experienced as you may deem yourself — with the care of our young ladies of honour. Your venerable age, mylord," she continued, smiling, "may be better assorted with that of my Lord Treasurer, who follows in the third boat, and whose experience even my Lord Willoughby's may be improved by."

Lord Willoughby hid his disappointment under a smile — laughed, was confused, bowed, and left the Queen's barge to go on board my Lord Burleigh's. Leicester, who endeavoured to divert his thoughts from all internal reflection, by fixing them on what was passing around, watched this circumstance among others. But when the boat put off from the shore — when the music sounded from a barge which accompanied them — when the shouts of the populace were heard from the shore, and all reminded him of the situation in which he was placed, he abstracted his thoughts and feelings by a strong effort from every thing but the necessity of maintaining himself in the favour of his patroness, and exerted his talents of pleasing captivation with such success, that the Queen, alternately delighted with his conversation, and alarmed for his health, at length imposed a temporary silence on him, with playful yet anxious care, lest his flow of spirits should exhaust him.



“My lords,” she said “having passed for a time our edict of silence upon our good Leicester, we will call you to counsel on a gamesome matter, more fitted to be now treated of, amidst mirth and music, than in the gravity of our ordinary deliberations. — Which of you, my lords,” said she, smiling, “know aught of a petition from Orson Pinnit, the keeper, as he qualifies himself, of our royal bears? Who stands godfather to his request?”

“Marry, with your Grace’s good permission, that do I,” said the Earl of Sussex. — “Orson Pinnit was a stout soldier before he was so mangled by the skenes of the Irish clan Mac Donough, and I trust your Grace will be, as you always have been, good mistress to your good and trusty servants.”

“Surely,” said the Queen, “it is our purpose to be so, and in especial to our poor soldiers and sailors, who hazard their lives for little pay. We would give,” she said, with her eyes sparkling, “yonder royal palace of ours to be an hospital for their use, rather than they should call their mistress ungrateful. — But this is not the question,” she said, her tone, which had been awakened by her patriotic feelings, once more subsiding into the tone of gay and easy conversation; “for this Orson Pinnit’s request goes something farther. He complains, that



amidst the extreme delight with which men haunt the play-houses, and in especial their eager desire for seeing the exhibitions of one Will Shakespeare, (whom I think, my lords, we have all heard something of,) the manly amusement of bear-baiting is falling into comparative neglect; since men will rather throng to see these roguish players kill each other in jest, than to see our royal dogs and bears worry each other in bloody earnest — What say you to this, my Lord of Sussex?"

"Why, truly, gracious Madam," said Sussex, "you must expect little from an old soldier like me in favour of battles in sport, when they are compared with battles in earnest; and yet, by my faith, I wish Will Shakespeare no harm. He is a stout man at quarter-staff, and single falchion, though, as I am told, a halting fellow; and he stood, they say, a tough fight with the rangers of old Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecot, when he broke his deerpark and kissed his keeper's daughter."

"I cry you mercy, my Lord of Sussex," said Queen Elizabeth, interrupting him; "that matter was heard in council, and we will not have this fellow's offence exaggerated — there was no kissing in the matter, and the defendant hath put the denial on record. — But what say you to his present practice, my lord, on the stage?"



for there lies the point, and not in any ways touching his former errors, in breaking parks, or the other follies you speak of."

"Why truly, Madam," replied Sussex, "as I said before, I wish the gamesome mad fellow no injury. Some of his whoreson poetry (I crave your Grace's pardon for such a phrase) has rung in mine ears as if they sounded to boot and saddle. — But then it is all froth and folly — no substance or seriousness in it, as your Grace has already well touched. — What are half a dozen knaves, with rusty foils and tattered targets, making but a mere mockery of a stout fight, to compare to the royal game of bear-baiting, which hath been graced by your Highness's countenance, and that of your royal predecessors, in this your princely kingdom, famous for matchless mastiffs, and bold bear-wards, over all Christendom? Greatly is it to be doubted that the race of both will decay, if men should rather throng to hear the lungs of an idle player belch forth nonsensical bombast, instead of bestowing their pence in encouraging the bravest image of war that can be shewn in peace, and that is the sports of the Bear-garden. There you may see the bear lying at guard with his red pinky eyes, watching the onset of the mastiff, like a wily captain, who maintains his defence that an assailant may be tempted to



venture within his danger. And then comes Sir Mastiff, like a worthy champion, in full career at the throat of his adversary — and then shall Sir Bruin teach him the reward for those who, in their over-courage, neglect the policies of war, and, catching him in his arms, strain him to his breast like a lusty wrestler, until rib after rib crack like the shot of a pistolet. And then another mastiff, as bold, but with better aim and sounder judgment, catches Sir Bruin by the nether lip, and hangs fast, while he tosses about his blood and slaver, and tries in vain to shake Sir Talbot from his hold. And then” —

“Nay, by my honour, my lord,” said the Queen, laughing, “you have described the whole so admirably, that, had we never seen a bear-baiting, as we have beheld many, and hope, with heaven’s allowance, to see many more, your words were sufficient to put the whole Bear-garden before our eyes. — But come, who speaks next in this case? — My Lord of Leicester, what say you?”

“Am I then to consider myself as unmuzzled, please your Grace?” replied Leicester.

“Surely, my lord — that is, if you feel hearty enough to take part in our game,” answered Elizabeth; “and yet, when I think of your cognizance of the bear and ragged staff, methinks we had better hear some less partial orator.”



“Nay, on my word, gracious Princess,” said the Earl, “though my brother Ambrose of Warwick and I do carry the ancient cognizance your Highness deigns to remember, I nevertheless desire nothing but fair play on all sides; or, as they say, ‘fight dog, fight bear.’ And in behalf of the players, I must needs say that they are witty knaves, whose rants and jests keep the minds of the commons from busying themselves with state affairs, and listening to traitorous speeches, idle rumours, and disloyal insinuations. When men are agape to see how Marlow, Shakespeare, and other play artificers, work out their fanciful plots as they call them, the mind of the spectators is withdrawn from the conduct of their rulers.”

“We would not have the mind of our subjects withdrawn from the consideration of our own conduct, my lord,” answered Elizabeth; “because the more closely it is examined, the true motives by which we are guided will appear the more manifest.”

“I have heard, however, Madam,” said the Dean of St. Asaph’s, an eminent Puritan, “that these players are wont, in their plays, not only to introduce profane and lewd expressions, tending to foster sin and harlotry, but even to bellow out such reflections on government, its origin and its object, as tend to render the sub-



ject discontented, and shake the solid foundations of civil society. And it seems to be, under your Grace's favour, far less than safe to permit these naughty foul-mouthed knaves to ridicule the godly for their decent gravity, and in blaspheming heaven, and slandering its earthly rulers, to set at defiance the laws both of God and man."

"If we could think this were true, my lord," said Elizabeth, "we should give sharp correction for such offences. But it is ill arguing against the use of any thing from its abuse. And touching this Shakespeare, we think there is that in his plays that is worth twenty Bear-gardens; and that this new undertaking of his Chronicles, as he calls them, may entertain, with honest mirth, mingled with useful instruction, not only our subjects, but even the generation which may succeed to us."

"Your Majesty's reign will need no such feeble aid to make it remembered to the latest posterity," said Leicester. "And yet, in his way, Shakespeare hath so touched some incidents of your Majesty's happy government, as may countervail what has been spoken by his reverence the Dean of St. Asaph's. There are some lines, for example — I would my nephew, Philip Sidney, were here, they are scarce ever out of his mouth — they are spoken in a mad tale of fairies,



love-charms, and I wot not what besides; but beautiful they are, however short they may and must fall of the subject to which they bear a bold relation — and Philip murmurs them, I think, even in his dreams.”

“You tantalize us, my lord,” said the Queen — “Master Philip Sidney is, we know, a minion of the Muses, and we are pleased it should be so. Valour never shines to more advantage than when united with the true taste and love of letters. But surely there are some others among our young courtiers who can recollect what your lordship has forgotten amid weightier affairs. — Master Tressilian, you are described to me as a worshipper of Minerva — remember you aught of these lines?”

Tressilian’s heart was too heavy, his prospects in life too fatally blighted, to profit by the opportunity which the Queen thus offered to him of attracting her attention, but he determined to transfer the advantage to his more ambitious young friend; and, excusing himself on the score of want of recollection, he added, that he believed the beautiful verses, of which my Lord of Leicester had spoken, were in the remembrance of Master Walter Raleigh.

At the command of the Queen, that cavalier repeated, with accent and manner which even added to their exquisite delicacy of tact and



beauty of description, the celebrated vision of Oberon.

“That very time I saw, (but thou could'st not,)

Flying between the cold moon and the earth,  
Cupid, all arm'd: a certain aim he took

At a fair vestal, throned by the west;

And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,

As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts:

But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft

Quench'd in the chaste beams of the wat'ry  
moon;

And the imperial vot'ress passed on,

In maiden meditation, fancy free.”

The voice of Raleigh, as he repeated the last lines, became a little tremulous, as if diffident how the Sovereign to whom the homage was addressed might receive it, exquisite as it was. If this diffidence was affected, it was good policy; but if real, there was little occasion for it. The verses were not probably new to the Queen, for when was ever such elegant flattery long in reaching the royal ear to which it was addressed? But it was not the less welcome when repeated by such a speaker as Raleigh. Alike delighted with the matter, the manner, and the graceful form and animated countenance of the



gallant young reciter, Elizabeth kept time to every cadence, with look and with finger. When the speaker had ceased, she murmured over the last lines as if scarce conscious that she was overheard, and as she uttered the words,

“In maiden meditation, fancy free.”

she dropt into the Thames the supplication of Orson Pinnit, keeper of the royal bears, to find more favourable acceptance at Sheerness, or wherever the tide might waft it.

Leicester was spurred to emulation by the success of the young courtier's exhibition, as the veteran racer is roused when a highmettled colt passes him on the way. He turned the discourse on shows, banquets, pageants, and on the character of those by whom these gay scenes were then frequented. He mixed acute observation with light satire, in that just proportion which was free alike from malignant slander and insipid praise. He mimicked with ready accent the manners of the affected or the clownish, and made his own graceful tone and manner seem doubly such when he resumed it. Foreign countries — their customs — their manners — the rules of their courts — the fashions, and even the dress of their ladies, were equally his theme; and seldom did he conclude without



conveying some compliment, always couched in delicacy, and expressed with propriety, to the Virgin Queen, her court and her government. Thus passed the conversation during this pleasure voyage, seconded by the rest of the attendants upon the royal person, in gay discourse, varied by remarks upon ancient classics and modern authors, and enriched by maxims of deep policy and sound morality, by the statesmen and sages who sate around, and mixed wisdom with the lighter talk of a female court.

When they returned to the palace, Elizabeth accepted, or rather selected, the arm of Leicester to support her, from the stairs where they landed, to the great gate. It even seemed to him, (though that might arise from the flattery of his own imagination,) that during this short passage, she leaned on him somewhat more than the slippiness of the way necessarily demanded. Certainly her actions and words combined to express a degree of favour, which, even in his proudest days, he had not till then attained. His rival, indeed, was repeatedly graced by the Queen's notice; but it was in a manner that seemed to flow less from spontaneous inclination, than as extorted by a sense of his merit. And, in the opinion of many experienced courtiers, all the favour she shewed him was overbalanced, by her whispering in the ear of the



Lady Derby, that «now she saw sickness was a better alchemist than she before wotted of, seeing it had changed my Lord of Sussex's copper nose into a golden one.”

The jest transpired, and the Earl of Leicester enjoyed his triumph, as one to whom court favour had been both the primary and the ultimate motive of life, while he forgot, in the intoxication of the moment, the perplexities and dangers of his own situation. Indeed, strange as it may appear, he thought less at that moment of the perils arising from his secret union, than of the marks of grace which Elizabeth from time to time shewed to young Raleigh. They were indeed transient, but they were conferred on one accomplished in mind and body, with grace, gallantry, literature, and valour. An accident occurred in the course of the evening which rivetted Leicester's attention to this object.

The nobles and courtiers who had attended the Queen on her pleasure expedition, were invited, with royal hospitality, to a splendid banquet in the hall of the palace. The table was not, indeed, graced by the presence of the Sovereign; for, agreeable to her idea of what was at once modest and dignified, the Maiden Queen, on such occasions, was wont to take in private, or with one or two favourite ladies, her light and temperate meal. After a moderate interval,



the court again met in the splendid gardens of the palace; and it was while thus engaged, that the Queen suddenly asked a lady, who was near to her both in place and favour, what had become of the young Squire Lack-Cloak.

The Lady Paget answered, "she had seen Master Raleigh but two or three minutes since, standing at the window of a small pavilion or pleasure house, which looked out on the Thames, and writing on the glass with a diamond ring."

"That ring," said the Queen, "was a small token I gave him, to make amends for his spoiled mantle. Come, Paget, let us see what use he has made of it, for I can see through him already. He is a marvellously sharp-witted spirit."

They went to the spot, within sight of which, but at some distance, the young cavalier still lingered, as the fowler watches the net which he has set. The Queen approached the window, on which Raleigh had used her gift, to inscribe the following line: —

"Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall."

The Queen smiled, read it twice over, once with deliberation to Lady Paget, and once again to herself. "It is a pretty beginning," she said,



after the consideration of a moment or two; „but methinks the muse hath deserted the young wit, at the very outset of his task. It were good-natured — were it not, Lady Paget, — to complete it for him? Try your rhyming faculties.”

Lady Paget, prosaic from her cradle upwards, as ever any lady of the bed-chamber before or after her, disclaimed all possibility of assisting the young poet.

„Nay, then, we must sacrifice to the Muses ourselves,” said Elizabeth.

„The incense of no one can be more acceptable,” said Lady Paget; „and your highness will impose such obligation on the ladies of Parnassus” —

„Hush, Paget,” said the Queen, „you speak sacrilege against the immortal Nine — yet virgins themselves, they should be exorable to a Virgin Queen — and, therefore — let me see how runs his verse —

„Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall.”

Might not the answer, (for fault of a better) run thus:

„If thy mind fail thee, do not climb at all.”



The dame of honour uttered an exclamation of joy and surprise at so happy a termination; and certainly a worse has been applauded, even when coming from a less distinguished author.

The Queen, thus encouraged, took off a diamond ring, and saying, «We will give this gallant some cause of marvel, when he finds his couplet perfected without his own interference,” she wrote her own line beneath that of Raleigh.

The Queen left the pavilion — but retiring slowly, and often looking back, she could see the young cavalier steal, with the flight of a lapwing, towards the place where he had seen her make a pause; — «She staid but to observe,” as she said, «that her train had taken;” and then, laughing at the circumstance with the Lady Paget, she took the way slowly towards the palace. Elizabeth, as they returned, cautioned her companion not to mention to any one the aid which she had given to the young poet — and Lady Paged promised scrupulous secrecy. It is to be supposed, that she made a mental reservation in favour of Leicester, to whom her ladyship transmitted without delay an anecdote, so little calculated to give him pleasure.

Raleigh, in the meanwhile, stole back to the window, and read, with a feeling of intoxication, the encouragement thus given him by the Queen in person to follow out his ambitious



career, and returned to Sussex and his retinue, then on the point of embarking to go up the river, his heart beating high with gratified pride, and with hope of future distinction.

The reverence due to the person of the Earl prevented any notice being taken of the reception he had met with at court, until they had landed, and the household were assembled in the great hall at Say's Court; while that Lord, exhausted by his late illness, and the fatigues of the day, had retired to his chamber, demanding the attendance of Wayland, his successful physician. Wayland, however, was no where to be found; and, while some of the party were, with military impatience, seeking him, and cursing his absence, the rest flocked around Raleigh, to congratulate him on his prospects of court favour.

He had the good taste and judgment to conceal the decisive circumstance of the couplet, to which Elizabeth had deigned to find a rhyme; but other circumstances had transpired which plainly intimated that he had made some progress in the Queen's favour. All hastened to wish him joy on the mended appearance of his fortune: some from real regard; some, perhaps, from hopes that his preferment might hasten their own; and most from a mixture of these motives, and a sense that the countenance shewn



to any one of Sussex's household, was, in fact, a triumph to the whole. Raleigh returned the kindest thanks to them all, disowning, with becoming modesty, that one day's fair reception made a favourite, any more than one swallow a summer. But he observed that Blount did not join in the general congratulation, and, somewhat hurt at his apparent unkindness, he plainly asked him the reason.

Blount replied with equal sincerity — "My good Walter, I wish thee as well as do any of those chattering gulls, who are whistling and whooping gratulations in thine ear, because it seems fair weather with thee. But I fear for thee, Walter, (and he wiped his honest eye,) I fear for thee with all my heart. These court-tricks, and gambols, and flashes of fine women's favour, are the tricks and trinkets that bring fair fortunes to farthings, and fine faces and witty coxcombs to the acquaintance of dull blocks and sharp axes."

So saying, Blount arose and left the hall, while Raleigh looked after him with an expression that blanked for a moment his bold and animated countenance.

Stanley just then entered the hall, and said to Tressilian, "My lord is calling for your fellow Wayland, and your fellow Wayland is just come hither in a sculler, and is calling for you,



nor will he go to my lord till he sees you. The fellow looks as he were mazed, methinks — I would you would see him immediately.”

Tressilian instantly left the hall, and causing Wayland Smith to be shewn into a withdrawing apartment, and lights placed, he conducted the artist thither, and was surprised when he observed the emotion of his countenance.

“What is the matter with you, Smith?” said Tressilian; “have you seen the devil?”

“Worse, sir, worse,” replied Wayland, “I have seen a basilisk. — Thank God, I saw him first, for being so seen, and seeing not me, he will do the less harm.”

“In God’s name, speak sense,” said Tressilian, “and say what you mean.”

“I have seen my old master,” said the artist — “Last night, a friend whom I had acquired, took me to see the palace clock, judging me to be curious in such works of art. At the window of a turret next to the clock-house I saw my old master.”

“Thou must have needs been mistaken,” said Tressilian.

“I was not mistaken,” said Wayland — “He that once hath his features by heart would know him amongst a million. He was anticly habited; but he cannot disguise himself from me, God be praised, as I can from him. I will



not, however, tempt Providence by remaining within his ken. Tarleton the player himself could not so disguise himself, but that, sooner or later, Doboobie would find him out. I must away to-morrow; for, as we stand together, it were death to me to remain within reach of him."

"But the Earl of Sussex?" said Tressilian.

"He is in little danger from what he has hitherto taken, providing he swallow the matter of a bean's size of the Orvietan, every morning fasting — but let him beware of a relapse."

"And how is that to be guarded against?" said Tressilian.

"Only by such caution as you would use against the devil," answered Wayland. "Let my lord's clerk of the kitchen kill his lord's meat himself, and dress it himself, using no spice but what he procures from the surest hands — Let the sewer serve it up himself, and let the master of my lord's household see that both clerk and sewer taste the dishes which the one dresses and the other serves. Let my lord use no perfumes which come not from well accredited persons; no unguents — no pomades. Let him, on no account, drink with strangers, or eat fruit with them, either in the way of nooning or otherwise. Especially, let him observe such caution, if he goes to Kenilworth — the excuse of his illness,



and his being under diet, will, and must, cover the strangeness of such practice."

"And thou," said Tressilian, "what doest thou think to make of thyself?"

"France, Spain, either India, East or West, shall be my refuge," said Wayland, "ere I venture my life by residing within ken of Doboobie, Demetrius, or whatever else he calls himself for the time."

"Well," said Tressilian, "this happens not inopportunately — I had business for you in Berkshire, but in the opposite extremity to the place where thou art known; and ere thou hadst found out this new reason for living private, I had settled to send thee thither upon a secret embassy."

The artist expressed himself willing to receive his commands, and Tressilian, knowing he was well acquainted with the outline of his business at court, frankly explained to him the whole, mentioned the agreement which subsisted betwixt Giles Gosling and him, and told what had that day been averred in the presence-chamber by Varney, and supported by Leicester.

"Thou seest," he added, "that, in the circumstances in which I am placed, it behoves me to keep a narrow watch on the motions of these unprincipled men, Varney and his complices, Foster and Lambourne, as well as on those



of my Lord Leicester himself, who, I suspect, is partly a deceiver, and not altogether the deceived in that matter. Here is my ring, as a pledge to Giles Gosling — here is besides gold, which shall be trebled if thou serve me faithfully. Away down to Cumnor, and see what happens there."

"I go with double good will," said the artist, "first, because I serve your honour, who has been so kind to me, and then, that I may escape my old master, who, if not an absolute incarnation of the devil, has, at least, as much of the dæmon about him, in will, word, and action, as ever polluted humanity. — And yet let him take care of me. I fly him now, as here-to-fore; but if, like the Scotch wild cattle, I am vexed by frequent pursuit, I may turn on him in hate and desperation. — Will your honour command my nag to be saddled? I will but give the medicine to my lord, divided in its proper proportions, with a few instructions. His safety will then depend on the care of his friends and domestics — for the past he is guarded, but let him beware of the future."

Wayland Smith accordingly made his farewell visit to the Earl of Sussex, dictated instructions as to his regimen, and precautions concerning his diet, and left Say's Court without waiting for morning.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

— *The moment comes* —

*It is already come — when thou must write  
The absolute total of thy life's vast sum.  
The constellations stand victorious o'er thee,  
The planets shoot good fortune in fair junctions,  
And tell thee, "Now's the time."*

*Schiller's Wallenstein, by Coleridge.*

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WHEN Leicester returned to his lodging, after a day so important and so harassing, in which, after riding out more than one gale, and touching on more than one shoal, his bark had finally gained the harbour with banner displayed, he seemed to experience as much fatigue as a mariner after a perilous storm. He spoke not a word while his chamberlain exchanged his rich court-mantle for a furred night-robe, and when this officer signified that Master Varney desired to speak with his lordship, he replied only by a



sullen nod. Varney, however, entered, accepting this signal as a permission, and the chamberlain withdrew.

The Earl remained silent and almost motionless in his chair, his head reclined on his hand, and his elbow resting upon the table which stood beside him, without seeming to be conscious of the entrance, or of the presence of his confidant. Varney waited for some minutes until he should speak, desirous to know what was the finally predominant mood of a mind, through which so many powerful emotions had that day taken their course. But he waited in vain, for Leicester continued still silent, and the confidant saw himself under the necessity of being the first to speak. "May I congratulate your lordship," he said, "on the deserved superiority you have this day attained over your most formidable rival?"

Leicester raised his head, and answered sadly, but without anger, "Thou, Varney, whose ready invention has involved me in a web of most mean and perilous falsehood, knowest best what reason there is for gratulation on the subject."

"Do you blame me, my lord," said Varney, "for not betraying, on the first push, the secret on which your fortunes depended, and which you have so oft and so earnestly recommended to my safe keeping? Your lordship was present in person, and might have contradicted me and



ruined yourself by an avowal of the truth; but surely it was no part of a faithful servant to have done so without your commands."

"I cannot deny it, Varney," said the Earl, rising and walking across the room; "my own ambition has been traitor to my love."

"Say rather, my lord, that your love has been traitor to your greatness, and barred you from such a prospect of honour and power as the world cannot offer to any other. To make my honoured lady a Countess, you have missed the chance of being yourself" —

He paused and seemed unwilling to complete the sentence.

"Of being myself *what*?" demanded Leicester; "speak out thy meaning, Varney."

"Of being yourself a KING, my lord," replied Varney; "and King of England to boot! — It is no treason to our Queen to say so. It would have chanced by her obtaining that which all true subjects wish her — a lusty, noble, and gallant husband."

"Thou ravest, Varney," answered Leicester. "Besides, our times have seen enough to make men loath the Crown Matrimonial which men take from their wives' lap. There was Darnley in Scotland."

"He!" said Varney; "a gull, a fool, a thrice sodden ass, who suffered himself to be fired off



into the air like a rocket on a rejoicing day. Had Mary had the hap to have wedded the noble Earl, *once* destined to share her throne, she had experienced a husband of different metal; and her husband had found in her a wife as complying and loving as the mate of the meanest squire, who follows the hounds a horseback, and holds her husband's bridle as he mounts."

"It might have been as thou say'st, Varney," said Leicester, a brief smile of self-satisfaction passing over his anxious countenance. "Henry Darnley knew little of women — with Mary, a man who knew her sex might have had some chance of holding his own. But not with Elizabeth, Varney — for I think, God, when he gave her the heart of a woman, gave her the head of a man to controul its follies. — No, I know her. — She will accept love-tokens, ay, and requite them with the like — put sugared sonnets in her bosom — ay, and answer them too — push gallantry to the very verge where it becomes exchange of affection — but she writes *nil ultra* to all which is to follow, and would not barter one iota of her own supreme power for all the alphabet of both Cupid and Hymen."

"The better for you, my lord," said Varney, "that is, in the case supposed, if such be her disposition; since you think you cannot aspire to become her husband. Her favourite you are,



and may remain, if the lady at Cumnor-Place remains in her present obscurity."

"Poor Amy!" said Leicester, with a deep sigh; "she desires so earnestly to be acknowledged in presence of God and man!"

"Ay, but, my lord," said Varney, "is her desire reasonable? — that is the question. — Her religious scruples are solved — she is an honoured and beloved wife — enjoying the society of her husband at such times as his weightier duties permit him to afford her his company — What would she more? I am right sure that a lady so gentle and so loving would consent to live her life through in a certain obscurity — which is, after all, not dimmer than when she was at Lidcote-Hall — rather than diminish the least jot of her lord's honours and greatness by a premature attempt to share them."

"There is something in what thou say'st," said Leicester; "and her appearance here were fatal — yet she must be seen at Kenilworth, Elizabeth will not forget that she has so appointed."

"Let me sleep on that hard point," said Varney; "I cannot else perfect the device I have on the stithy, which I trust will satisfy the Queen and please my honoured lady, yet leave this fatal secret where it is now buried. — Has your lordship further commands for the night?"



“I would be alone,” said Leicester. “Leave me, and place my steel casket on the table. — Be within summons.”

Varney retired — and the Earl, opening the window of his apartment, looked out long and anxiously upon the brilliant host of stars which glimmered in the brilliance of a summer firmament. The words burst from him as at unawares — “I had never more need that the heavenly bodies should befriend me, for my earthly path is darkened and confused.”

It is well known that the age reposed a deep confidence in the vain predictions of judicial astrology, and Leicester, though exempt from the general controul of superstition, was not in this respect superior to his time; but, on the contrary, was remarkable for the encouragement which he gave to the professors of this pretended science. Indeed, the wish to pry into futurity, so general among the human race of every description, is peculiarly to be found amongst those who trade in state mysteries, and the dangerous intrigues and cabals of courts. With heedful precaution to see that it had not been opened, or its locks tampered with, Leicester applied a key to the steel casket, and drew from it, first, a parcel of gold pieces, which he put into a silk purse; then a parchment inscribed with planetary signs, and the lines and calculations used in



framing horoscopes, on which he gazed intently for a few moments; and, lastly, took forth a large key, which, lifting aside the tapestry, he applied to a little concealed door in the corner of the apartment, and, opening it, disclosed a stair constructed in the thickness of the wall.

“Alasco,” said the Earl, with a voice raised, yet no higher raised than to be heard by the inhabitant of the small turret to which the stair conducted — “Alasco, I say, descend.”

“I come, my lord,” answered a voice from above. The foot of an aged man was heard, slowly descending the narrow stair, and Alasco entered the Earl’s apartment. The astrologer was a little man, and seemed much advanced in age, for his beard was long and white, and reached over his black doublet down to his silken girdle. His hair was of the same venerable hue. But his eye-brows were as dark as the keen and piercing black eyes which they shaded, and this peculiarity gave a wild and singular cast to the physiognomy of the old man. His cheek was still fresh and ruddy, and the eyes we have mentioned resembled those of a rat, in acuteness and even fierceness of expression. His manner was not without a sort of dignity; and the interpreter of the stars, though respectful, seemed altogether at his ease, and even assumed a



tone of instruction and command, in conversing with the prime favourite of Elizabeth.

“Your prognostications have failed, Alasco,” said the Earl, when they had exchanged salutations — “He is recovering.”

“My son,” replied the astrologer, “let me remind you, I warranted not his death — nor is there any prognostication that can be derived from the heavenly bodies, their aspects and their conjunctions, which is not liable to be controuled by the will of Heaven. *Astra regunt homines, sed regit astra Deus.*”

“Of what avail, then, is your mystery?” replied the Earl.

“Of much, my son,” replied the old man, “since it can shew the natural and probable course of events, although that course moves in subordination to an Higher Power. Thus, in reviewing the horoscope which your lordship subjected to my skill, you will observe that Saturn, being in the sixth House in opposition to Mars, retrograde in the House of Life, cannot but denote long and dangerous sickness, the issue whereof is in the will of Heaven, though death may probably be inferred — Yet if I knew the name of the party, I would erect another scheme.”

“His name is a secret,” said the Earl; “yet, I must own, thy prognostication hath not been unfaithful. He has been sick, and dangerously



so, not however to death. But hast thou again cast my horoscope as Varney directed thee, and art thou prepared to say what the stars tell of my present fortune?"

"My art stands at your command," said the old man; "and here, my son, is the map of thy fortunes, brilliant in aspect as ever beamed from those blessed signs whereby our life is influenced, yet not unchequered with fears, difficulties, and dangers."

"My lot were more than mortal were it otherwise," said the Earl; "proceed farther, and believe you speak with one ready to undergo his destiny in action and in passion, as may beseem a noble of England."

"Thy courage to do and to suffer, must be wound up yet a strain higher," said the old man. "The stars intimate yet a prouder title, yet an higher rank. It is for thee to guess their meaning, not for me to name it."

"Name it, I conjure you — name it, I command you," said the Earl, his eyes brightening as he spoke.

"I may not, and I will not," replied the old man. "The ire of princes is as the wrath of the lion. But mark, and judge for thyself. Here Venus, ascendant in the House of Life, and conjoined with Sol, showers down that flood of silver light, blent with gold, which promises



power, wealth, dignity, all that the proud heart of man desires, and in such abundance, that never the future Augustus of that old and mighty Rome heard from his *Haruspices* such a tale of glory, as from this rich text my lore might read to my favourite son."

"Thou doest but jest with me, father," said the Earl, astonished at the strain of enthusiasm in which the astrologer delivered his prediction.

"Is it for him to jest who hath his eye on heaven, who hath his foot on the grave?" returned the old man, solemnly.

The Earl made two or three strides through the apartment, with his hand outstretched, as one who follows the beckoning signal of some phantom, waving him on to deeds of high import. As he turned, however, he caught the eye of the astrologer fixed on him, while an observing glance of the most shrewd penetration shot from under the penthouse of his shaggy white eye-brows. Leicester's haughty and suspicious soul at once caught fire; he darted towards the old man from the further end of the lofty apartment, only standing still when his extended hand was within a foot of the astrologer's body.

"Wretch!" he said, "if you dare to palter with me, I will have your skin stripped from your living flesh! — Confess thou hast been hired



to deceive and to betray me — that thou art a cheat, and I thy silly prey and booty!"

The old man exhibited some symptoms of emotion, but not more than the furious deportment of his patron might have extorted from innocence itself.

"What means this violence, my lord?" he answered, "or in what can I have deserved it at your hand?"

"Give me proof," said the Earl, vehemently, "that you have not tampered with mine enemies."

"My lord," replied the old man, with dignity, "you can have no better proof than that which you yourself elected. In that turret I have spent the last twenty-four hours, under the key which has been in your own custody. The hours of darkness I have spent in gazing on the heavenly bodies with these dim eyes, and during those of light I have toiled this aged brain to complete the calculation arising from their combinations. Earthly food I have not tasted — earthly voice I have not heard — You are yourself aware I had no means of doing so — and yet I tell you — I who have been thus shut up in solitude and study — that within these twenty-four hours your star has become predominant in the horizon, and either the bright book of heaven speaks false, or there must have been a proportionate



revolution in your fortunes upon earth. If nothing has happened within that space to secure your power, or advance your favour, then am I indeed a cheat, and the divine art, which was first devised in the plains of Chaldæa, is a foul imposture."

"It is true," said Leicester, after a moment's reflection, "thou wert closely immured — and it is also true that the change has taken place in my situation which thou sayest the horoscope indicates."

"Wherefore this distrust then, my son," said the astrologer, assuming a tone of admonition; "the celestial intelligences brook not diffidence, even in their favourites."

"Peace, father," answered Leicester, "I erred. Not to mortal man, nor to celestial intelligence — under that which is Supreme — will Dudley's lips say more in condescension or apology. Speak rather to the present purpose — Amid these bright promises thou hast said there was a threatening aspect — Can thy skill tell whence, or by whose means, such danger seems to impend?"

"Thus far only," answered the astrologer, "does my art enable me to answer your query. The infortune is threatened by the malignant and adverse aspect, through means of a youth, — and, as I think, a rival; but whether in love or in prince's favour, I know not; nor can I give



farther indication respecting him, save that he comes from the western quarter."

"The western — ha!" replied Leicester, "it is enough — the tempest does indeed brew in that quarter! — Cornwall and Devon — Raleigh and Tressilian — one of them is indicated — I must beware of both. — Father, if I have done thy skill injustice, I will make thee a lordly recompense."

He took a purse of gold from the strong casket which stood before him — "Have thou double the recompense which Varney promised. — Be faithful — be secret — obey the directions thou shalt receive from my master of the horse, and grudge not a little seclusion or restraint in my cause — it shall be richly considered. — Here, Varney — conduct this venerable man to thine own lodging — tend him heedfully in all things, but see that he holds communication with no one."

Varney bowed, and the astrologer kissed the Earl's hand in token of adieu, and followed the master of the horse to another apartment, in which were placed wine and refreshments for his use."

The astrologer sat down to his repast, while Varney shut two doors with great precaution, examined the tapestry, lest any listener lurked



behind it; and then sitting down opposite to the sage, began to question him.

“Saw you my signal from the court beneath?”

“I did,” said Alasco, for by such name he was at present called, “and shaped the horoscope accordingly.”

“And it passed upon the patron without challenge?” continued Varney.

“Not without challenge,” replied the old man, “but it did pass; and I added, as before agreed, danger from a discovered secret, and a western youth.”

“My lord’s fear will stand sponsor to the one, and his conscience to the other, of these prognostications,” replied Varney. “Sure never man chose to run such a race as his, yet continued to retain those silly scruples! I am fain to cheat him to his own profit. But touching your matters, sage interpreter of the stars, I can tell you more of your own fortune than plan or figure can shew. You must be gone from hence forthwith.”

“I will not,” said Alasco, peevishly. “I have been too much hurried up and down of late — immured for day and night in a desolate turret-chamber — I must enjoy my liberty, and pursue my studies, which are of more import than the fate of fifty statesmen, and favourites, that rise and burst like bubbles in the atmosphere of a court.”



“At your pleasure,” said Varney, with a sneer that habit had rendered familiar to his features, and which forms the principal characteristic which painters have assigned to that of Satan — “At your pleasure,” he said, “you may enjoy your liberty, and your studies, until the daggers of Sussex’s followers are clashing within your doublet, and against your ribs.” The old man turned pale, and Varney proceeded. “Wot you not he hath offered a reward for the arch-quack and poison-vender, Demetrius, who sold certain precious spices to his lordship’s cook? — What! turn you pale, old friend? Does Hali already see an infortune in the House of Life? — Why, heark thee, we will have thee down to an old house of mine in the country, where thou shalt live with a hob-nailed slave, whom thy alchemy may convert into ducats, for to such conversion alone is thy art serviceable.”

“It is false, thou foul-mouthed railer,” said Alasco, shaking with impotent anger; “it is well known that I have approached more nearly to projection than any hermetic artist who now lives. There are not six chemists in the world who possess so near an approximation to the grand arcanum” —

“Come, come,” said Varney, interrupting him, “what means this, in the name of heaven? Do we not know one another? I believe thee



to be so perfect, — so very perfect, in the mystery of cheating, that, having imposed upon all mankind, thou hast at length, in some measure, imposed upon thyself; and without ceasing to dupe others, hast become a species of dupe to thine own imagination. Blush not for it, man — thou art learned, and shalt have classical comfort:

*Ne quisquam Ajacem possit superare nisi Ajax.*

No one but thyself could have gulled thee — and thou hast gulled the whole brotherhood of the Rosy Cross beside — none so deep in the mystery as thou. But heark thee in thine ear; — had the seasoning which spiced Sussex's broth wrought more surely, I would have thought better of the chemical science thou dost boast so highly."

"Thou art an hardened villain, Varney," replied Alasco; "many will do those things, who dare not speak of them."

"And many speak of them, who dare not do them," answered Varney; "but be not wroth — I will not quarrel with thee — if I did, I were fain to live on eggs for a month, that I might feed without fear. Tell me at once, how came thine art to fail thee at this great emergency?"

"The Earl of Sussex's horoscope intimates," re-



plied the astrologer, "that the sign of the ascendant being in combustion" —

"Away with your gibberish," replied Varney; "think'st thou it is the patron thou speak'st with?"

"I crave your pardon," replied the old man, "and swear to you, I know but one medicine that could have saved the Earl's life; and as no man living in England knows that antidote save myself, — moreover, as the ingredients, one of them in particular, are scarce possible to be come by, I must needs suppose his escape was owing to such a constitution of lungs and vital parts, as was never before bound up in a body of clay."

"There was some talk of a quack who waited on him," said Varney, after a moment's reflection. "Are you sure there is no one in England who has this secret of thine?"

"One man there was," said the doctor, "once my servant, who might have stolen this of me, with one or two other secrets of art. But content you, Master Varney, it is no part of my policy to suffer such interlopers to interfere in my trade. He pries into no mysteries more, I warrant you; for, as I well believe, he hath been wafted to heaven on the wing of a fiery dragon — Peace be with him. — But in this retreat of mine, shall I have the use of mine elaboratory?"



“Of a whole workshop, man,” said Varney; “for a reverend father Abbot, who was fain to give place to bluff King Hall, and some of his courtiers, a score of years since, had a chemist’s complete apparatus, which he was fain to leave behind him to his successors. Thou shalt there occupy, and melt, and puff, and blaze, and multiply, until the Green Dragon become a golden-goose, or whatever the newer phrase of the brotherhood may testify.”

“Thou art right, Master Varney,” said the alchemist, setting his teeth close, and grinding them together — “thou art right even in thy very contempt of right and reason. For what thou sayest in mockery, may in sober verity chance to happen ere we meet again. If the most venerable sages of ancient days have spoken the truth — if the most learned of our own have rightly received it, if I have been accepted wheresoever I travelled in Germany, in Poland, in Italy, and in the farther Tartary, as one to whom nature has unveiled her darkest secrets — if I have acquired the most secret signs and passwords of the Jewish Cabala, so that the greyest beard in the synagogue would brush the steps to make them clean for me — if all this is so, and if there remains but one step — one little step — betwixt my long, deep, and dark and subterranean progress, and that blaze of light which



shall shew Nature watching her richest and her most glorious productions in the very cradle — one step betwixt dependence and the power of sovereignty — one step betwixt poverty and such a sum of wealth as earth, without that noble secret, cannot minister from all her mines in the old or the new-found world — if this be all so, is it not reasonable that to this I dedicate my future life, secure, for a brief period of studious patience, to rise above the mean dependence upon favourites, and *their* favourites, by which I am now enthralled!”

“Now, bravo! bravo! my good father,” said Varney, with the usual Sardonic expression of ridicule on his countenance; “yet all this approximation to the philosopher’s stone, wringeth not one single crown out of my Lord Leicester’s pouch, and far less out of Richard Varney’s — *We* must have earthly and substantial services, man, and care not whom else thou canst delude with thy philosophical charlatanerie.”

“My son Varney,” said the alchemist, “the unbelief, gathered around thee like a frost-fog, hath dimmed thine acute perception to that which is a stumbling block to the wise, and which yet, to him who seeketh knowledge with humility, extends a lesson so clear, that he who runs may read. Hath not Art, think’st thou, the means of completing Nature’s imperfect con-



coctions in her attempts to form the precious metals, even as by art we can perfect those other operations, of incubation, distillation, fermentation, and similar processes of an ordinary description, by which we extract life itself out of a senseless egg, summon purity and vitality out of muddy dregs, or call into vivacity the inert substance of a sluggish liquid?"

"I have heard all this before," said Varney; "and my heart is proof against such cant ever since I sent twenty good gold pieces, (marry it was in the nonage of my wit,) to advance the grand magisterium, which all, God help the while, vanished *in fumo*. Since that moment, when I paid for my freedom, I defy chemistry, astrology, palmistry, and every other occult art, were it as secret as hell itself, to unloose the stricture of my purse-strings. Marry, I neither defy the manna of Saint Nicholas, nor can I dispense with it. Thy first task must be to prepare some when thou getst down to my little sequestered retreat yonder, and then make as much gold as thou wilt."

"I will make no more of that dose," said the Alchemist, resolutely.

"Then," said the master of the horse, "thou shalt be hanged for what thou hast made already, and so were the great secret for ever lost to mankind. — Do not humanity this injustice, good



father, but e'en bend to thy destiny, and make us an ounce or two of this same stuff, which cannot prejudice above one or two individuals, in order to gain life-time to discover the universal medicine, which shall clear away all mortal diseases at once. But cheer up, thou grave, learned, and most melancholy jackanape! Hast thou not told me, that a moderate portion of thy drug hath mild effects, no ways dangerous to the human frame, but which produce depression of spirits, nausea, headache, an unwillingness to change of place — even such a state of temper as would keep a bird from flying out of a cage, were the door left open?"

"I have said so, and it is true," said the alchemist; "this effect will it produce, and the bird who partakes of it in such proportion, shall sit for a season drooping on her perch, without thinking either of the free blue sky, or of the fair greenwood, though the one be lighted by the rays of the rising sun, and the other ringing with the newly awakened song of all the feathered inhabitants of the forest."

"And this without danger to life?" said Varney, somewhat anxiously.

"Ay, so that proportion and measure be not exceeded; and so that one who knows the nature of the manna be ever near to watch the symptoms, and succour in case of need."



“Thou shalt regulate the whole,” said Varney; “thy reward shall be princely, if thou keep’st time and touch, and exceedest not the due proportion to the prejudice of her health — otherwise thy punishment shall be as signal.”

“The prejudice of *her* health,” repeated Alasco; “it is, then, a woman I am to use my skill upon?”

“No, thou fool,” replied Varney, “said I not it was a bird — a reclaimed linnet, whose pipe might sooth a hawk when in mid stoop? — I see thine eye sparkle, and I know thy beard is not altogether so whithe as art has made it — *that*, at least, thou hast been able to transmute to silver. But mark me, this is no mate for thee. This caged bird is dear to one who brooks no rivalry, and far less such rivalry as thine, and her health must over all things be cared for. But she is in the case of being commanded down to yonder Kenilworth revels; and it is most expedient — most needful — most necessary, that she fly not thither. Of these necessities and their causes, it is not needful that she should know aught, and it is to be thought that her own wish may lead her to combat all ordinary reasons which can be urged for her remaining a house-keeper.”

“That is but natural,” said the alchemist with a strange smile, which yet bore a greater refer-



ence to the human character, than the uninterested and abstracted gaze which his physiognomy had hitherto expressed, where all seemed to refer to some world distant from that which was existing around him.

«It is so,” answered Varney; «you understand women well, though it may have been long since you were conversant amongst them. — Well then, she is not to be contradicted — yet she is not to be humoured. Understand me — a slight illness, sufficient to take away the desire of removing from thence, and to make such of your wise fraternity as may be called in to aid, recommend a quiet residence at home, will, in one word, be esteemed good service, and remunerated as such.”

«I am not to be asked to affect the House of Life?” said the chemist.

«On the contrary, we will have thee hanged if thou doest,” replied Varney.

«And I must,” added Alasco, «have opportunity to do my turn, and all facilities for concealment or escape, should there be detection?”

«All, all, and every thing, thou infidel in all but the impossibilities of alchemy — Why, man, for what dost thou take me?”

The old man rose, and taking a light, walked towards the end of the apartment, where was a door that led to the small sleeping room destined



for his reception during that night. — At the door he turned round, and slowly repeated Varney's question ere he answered it. "For what do. I take thee, Richard Varney? — Why, for a worse devil than I have been myself. But I am in your toils, and I must serve you till my term be out."

"Well, well," answered Varney hastily, "be stirring with grey light. It may be we shall not need thy medicine — Do nought till I myself come down — Michael Lambourne shall guide you to the place of your destination."

When Varney heard the adept's door shut and carefully bolted within, he stepped towards it, and with similar precaution carefully locked it on the outside, and took the key from the lock, muttering to himself, "Worse than *thee*, thou poisoning quack-salver and witch-monger, who, if thou art not a bounden slave to the devil, it is only because he disdains such an apprentice! I am a mortal man, and seek by mortal means the gratification of my passions, and advancement of my prospects — Thou art a vassal of hell itself. — So ho, Lambourne!" he called at another door, and Michael made his appearance, with a flushed cheek and an unsteady step.

"Thou art drunk, thou villain!" said Varney to him.

"Doubtless, noble sir," replied the unabashed



Michael, we have been drinking all even to the glories of the day, and to my noble Lord of Leicester, and his valiant master of the horse. — Drunk! odds blades and poniards, he that would refuse to swallow a dozen healths on such an evening, is a base besognio, and a puckfist, and shall swallow six inches of my dagger!"

"Hark ye, scoundrel," said Varney, "be sober on the instant — I command thee. I know thou canst throw off thy drunken folly, like a fool's coat, at pleasure; and if not, it were the worse for thee."

Lambourne drooped his head, left the apartment, and returned in two or three minutes with his face composed, his hair adjusted, his dress in order, and exhibiting as great a difference from his former self as if the whole man had been changed.

"Art thou sober now, and doest thou comprehend me?" said Varney, sternly.

Lambourne bowed in acquiescence.

"Thou must presently down to Cumnor Place with the reverend man of art, who sleeps yonder in the little vaulted chamber. Here is the key, that thou may'st call him by times. Take another trusty fellow with you. Use him well on the journey, but let him not escape you — pistol him if he attempt it, and I will be your warrant. I will give thee letters to Foster. The



doctor is to occupy the lower apartments of the eastern quadrangle, with freedom to use the old laboratory and its implements. — He is to have no access to the lady but such as I shall point out — only she may be amused to see his philosophical jugglery. Thou wilt await at Cumnor Place my farther orders; and, as thou livest, beware of the ale-bench and the aqua-vitæ flask. Each breath drawn in Cumnor Place must be kept severed from common air.”

“Enough, my lord — I mean my worshipful master — soon, I trust, to be my worshipful knightly master. You have given me my lesson and my license; — I will execute the one, and not abuse the other. I will be in the saddle by day-break.”

“Do so, and deserve favour. — Stay — ere thou goest fill me a cup of wine — not out of that flask, sirrah,” — as Lambourne was pouring out from that which Alasco had left half finished, “fetch me a fresh one.”

Lambourne obeyed, and Varney, after rinsing his mouth with the liquor, drank a full cup, and said, as he took up a lamp to retreat to his sleeping apartment, “It is strange — I am as little the slave of fancy as any one, yet I never speak for a few minutes with this fellow Alasco, but my mouth and lungs feel as if soiled with the fumes of calcined arsenic — pah!”



So saying, he left the apartment. Lambourne lingered, to drink a cup of the freshly opened flask. "It is from Saint-John's-Berg," he said, as he paused on the draught to enjoy its flavour, "and has the true relish of the violet. But I must forbear it now, that I may one day drink it at my own pleasure." And he quaffed a goblet of water to quench the fumes of the Rhenish wine, retired slowly towards the door, made a pause, and then, finding the temptation irresistible, walked hastily back, and took another long pull at the wine flask, without the formality of a cup.

"Were it not for this accursed custom," he said, "I might climb as high a Varney himself. But who can climb, when the room turns round with him like a parish-top? I would the distance were greater, or the road rougher, betwixt my hand and mouth! — But I will drink nothing to-morrow, save water — nothing save fair water."

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